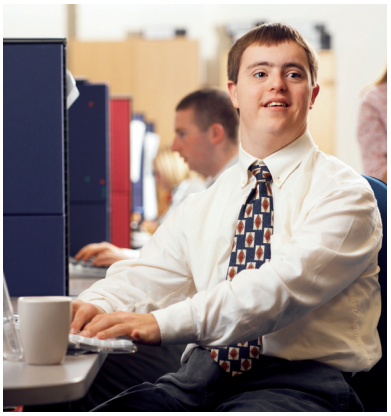

tips

Tips for Transition

compiled and edited by

Ryan Kellems

Mary E. Morningstar

University of Kansas

Transition Coalition

In collaboration with the
Division of Career Development and Transition

June 2009

The Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) and the Transition Coalition have collected and disseminated these tips in an effort to enhance public access to information about transition activities. Our intention is to provide resources that are current and accurate. We do not endorse or promote any of the products, Web sites, or ideas presented in the tips. Although every attempt is made to ensure the accuracy of this information, we can make no guarantees. We will, of course, make every effort to correct errors brought to our attention. If you find an error in one of the tips listed, you may contact us. Please credit the source when copying all or part of this material.

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tips for **Transition Planning**

Tip 1

Organize a Transition Group that Meets Once a Month. During the Transition Group the students are grouped according to grade level and their transition plan. The students are taught skills needed by 9th graders, 10th graders, 11th graders and 12th graders. Parents have quarterly meetings to review their child's work from Transition Group as well as to provide information parents need to be a partner in the process. The Transition Groups have been in existence for several years and have helped make the actual transition from high school to work or college smoother.

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State: *GA*

Tip 2

10 Steps Toward Transition from School.

Step 1: Person-centered Planning—Give students a chance to share their dreams for the future. Together, the student and a planning group develop a vision of "positive possibilities" for the student's future. The group leaves with action steps that can be taken to move in the direction of the student's vision.

Step 2: Intake and Eligibility—Families should learn about these community resources and agencies, eligibility requirements, and the process for applying. IEP teams can assist students and families to complete applications so that when the student leaves school, services are in place.

Step 3: Identify Community-based Service Providers—Once students are eligible for funding, students and families can choose to access services from providers that will continue with the student into adult life, and schools can help students and families to find these providers when they are ready.

Step 4: Transition Assessment—Assessments can be formal or informal, and should support the student and the IEP team to determine the student's interests, strengths, preferences, and priorities related to adult living. Assessments should be selected based on the questions and priorities the student and team have about the student's successful transition from school.

Step 5: Self-advocacy and Student Training—One important and often overlooked area is the student's need for support and training to participate in planning teams. This can include training in effective communication, leadership skills, disability awareness, and understanding how to access community-based services to meet health, transportation, and community living needs.

Step 6: Parent Training—Parents need training about the changing role of their child when transitioning to adulthood, and about the opportunities and systems that exist from a number of adult service agencies that support people with disabilities. Parents can participate in transition parent groups, attend transition trainings and workshops, and get to know other parents who have supported their children with disabilities to make a successful transition from school to adult life.

Step 7: Guardianship and Estate Planning—All families need to consider the reality that part of a student's changing role is that he or she will automatically become an independent adult decision-maker at age 18. There are a number of options to protect a student's decision-making in a way that fits with the student's ability level when he or she turns 18. There are also a number of strategies to plan for student's financial protection as adults. Families should meet with an attorney to discuss these options well in advance of the student's 18th birthday.

Step 8: Visits and Gathering Information about Options—As students enter their last two years of high school they should begin visiting places that may provide services to them after they transition. Students and their families will need to collect information about what different places have to offer, and advocate for individualized services if there is not a clear fit for the student's needs based on these visits. The goal of these visits is to determine what places and services would be ideal to fill the student's daily schedule after he or she finishes school.

Step 9: Answer the "Transportation" Question—A critical question that students and families need to answer is, "How will I get there?" Public transportation options are often limited; however, look for other options that exist to support students to get to and from work, school, and recreational activities after they finish high school. Families should discuss transportation options with their IEP teams, and investigate services including driving assessments and specialized driver's education, ADA door-to-door transportation services, and making sure students know how to call and pay for a cab in emergencies. Families should also consider how they will communicate once the student is spending time out and about in the community.

Step 10: Building Strength/Maintaining Hope—No one can navigate the transition from school to adult life without help. It's important for students who have disabilities and their families to consider how they can

—continued on page 6

build in activities and relationships to enjoy this time, as well as activities and relationships to support themselves in the future. If students and families pay attention to the things that will encourage and support them, transition planning can be exciting, rewarding, and — believe it or not — FUN!
Contact: *Laurel Peltier | lpeltier@shschools.com*
State: *MA*

Tip 3
Use an IEP Agenda Flip Chart. The use of an IEP Agenda flip chart helps the team cover the transition information that is important and focuses on the process, not the just the paperwork. I personally attend several hundred IEPs a year and have used the tool to help provide a better understand for all team members.
Contact: *Maria Peak | mariapeak60@gmail.com*
State: *MI*

Tip 4
Provide Training on How to Write Transition Plans and How to Do Transition Assessment. I train teachers on writing transition plans and give information on how to do transition assessment. I also work closely with high school juniors and seniors, providing them and their parents with information on agencies that help when they exit the school setting, employment possibilities, how to get into college, etc. I also work with the community-based classroom teacher to find job training sites for students and show the teachers best practices in functional life skills curriculum.
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State: *MS*

Tip 5
Start the Transition Process Early by Having Realistic Transition Goals in Place by the 9th and 10th Grade. Transition planning should begin early in order to be successful. The goals should be realistic and start during the 9th and 10th grade. Information regarding the student can be collected through informal interviews, positive student profile sheet, community-based work experience and general observation. A close partnership needs to be developed with the student, parent, teachers, and administration. When everyone works together the chance of a successful transition is more likely to occur. The transition coordinator must also develop a relationship with adult service providers such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
Contact: *Iris Slomovitz | Islomovitz@aol.com*
State: *NJ*

Tip 6
Use a Transition Interview with Students Beginning at Age 13. We use a format developed by our Area Educational Agency transition team. This information is used to develop transition IEPs. Interview sections include post-secondary living, post-secondary learning, post-secondary working, employability skills, and recreation/leisure.
Contact: *Duane Holub | dholub@aea14.k12.ia.us*
State: *IA*

Tip 7
Use the Guidebook, "Secondary Transition Planning: A Framework for Successful Transition Planning for Young People with Special Needs." See http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/ed_secondarypl.pdf. This newly developed resource covers creating a transition team, gathering information initial planning, assessment, transition action plan (TAP), creating a student transition portfolio and follow-up and review. (This document is specific to Canada, not the United States.)
Contact: *Marlene B | mmbreitenbach@edu.pe.ca*
State: *Canada*

Tip 8
Share the Web-based Examples for SPP/APR Indicator 13 Checklist. These comprehensive training materials, approved by the U.S. Department of Education, empower student/family to have a seat at the transition table along with early childhood folks — to use IDEA guidelines as intended, to visualize and define success. Demystifies transition. See http://www.nsttac.org/Default.aspx?FileName=examples_i13_checklist
Contact: *none given*
State: *none given*

Tip 9
Ask One Question to Avoid "I Don't Know" Answers. When I have a student who has "no idea' what his or her interests are and trying to get anything out of that student gets the old "I don't know," I ask the following question that often gets the conversation going: "If I dropped you off at the mall and you had $500 to spend on yourself, what would you buy?" Many times this leads to interests as they buy things they are interested in. I have been using it for 15 years as a transition counselor.
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State: *NH*

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Tip 10

Begin to Develop Student Portfolios and Notebooks. It can be a simple three-ring binder. Save "best work," photos of activities, academic successes, interviews with teachers/others, peer comments/activities, video, audio, etc. This can be used for IEP meetings, job opportunities, college applications. Transition notebooks can include:

1) Thumbnail sketch of student's abilities, disabilities, likes/dislikes, routines, learning styles, etc.
2) Important information about students such as emergency numbers, medical issues, etc.
3) Reference section for students of daily routine information that they may need to refer to such as community information including important words; kitchen and cooking information including favorite recipes, restaurant info, etc.; daily calendar grids that can be filled in with words and/or pictures; etc.
4) Pictures and/or words showing what to do in specific emergency situations.
5) Maps to use in navigating community and maps to their residence.
6) Student's resume and references as well as any other pertinent job information.
7) Any other information needed and/or specific to individual students. Be sure to start early with the portfolio — in elementary grades, if possible.

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Tip 11

Transition is Something that Must be Considered all Through the Life of a Person with a Disability. If a child who has a disability is brought up around different people in a community — at sporting events, community events, restaurants, fairs, etc. — people within the community will know, appreciate, and understand. Later in life this under-standing will assist the person with a disability to have the confidence to go up and ask for jobs, go out with community friends, and feel safe within their community.

Contact: *Pamela Burke | pammyburke@hotmail.com*
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Tip 12

Have a Form for the 8th Grade Middle School Student Transitioning to the 9th Grade. Ask reflective questions about the academic year being completed, and their ideas about what would have made it better. This links the academic success directly to another task, which is more concrete for the 8th grade student.

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tips for Student Involvement

Tip 13

Be Patient and Use Effective Communication Skills when Communicating with the Students. When speaking with a student with a disability, your approach and tone play a big part of how much the student will listen and absorb. Be willing to wait for his or her response, as it may take a while, before the student can respond due to sensory or processing issues. Be aware of the student's body language, environment, and all that play a part for the student to respond. Pay attention to sounds, laughter, and commotion going on, whether it is outside or inside. Speak with respect in order for the student to know that you are interested. Our students deserve our respect, as much as we want them to respect us. Leave your troubles behind when speaking with students. They know the "temperature" of the moment when there are troubles surrounding our speech. The students sometimes only know how to react. Whenever the student can have a choice, by all means, give them one.

Contact: *Linda Finnegan | linnegan50@yahoo.com*
State: *CO*

Tip 14

Student-led IEP with a Focus on Transition Goals. The IEP transition meeting should be student-directed. This is often difficult for the student so we review and practice before the meeting. We review the original assessments discussing likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. We practice before the meeting so students know when they will speak and what they plan to say. Involving students in the IEP reaches students on so many levels, and there are numerous positive effects. My students are involved in writing their IEPs beginning as freshmen. They write the PLEPs, transition pages, and goals. This year, students also began creating PowerPoints to present at their IEP meetings — this has been the biggest change in relation to student interest. Now students are excited to work on their IEPs and look forward to their meetings. Students need to learn the self-determination skills they need in order to be able to take charge of their meeting

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States: *GA, NY, VA, CO, KY, NJ, OH*

Tip 15

Have the Student Create a Person-centered Plan. This plan should encompass the student's entire life and help the student establish supports so he or she is living his or her preferred lifestyle. So many times I see the school IEP so general or vague in this arena that it doesn't tell anything about the person's wants, dreams, and desires.

Contact: *Wilma Day | wilmaday@pld.com*
State: *KS*

Tip 16

Offer Advocacy 101 Class. This class looks at ways to inform others about the student's unique learning needs while being a positive role model. Part of the class is preparing and presenting a PowerPoint presentation for their IEP meetings. This class looks at ways to inform others about the student's unique learning needs while being a positive role model.

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State: *MN*

Tip 17

Offer Transition Class for High School Juniors and Seniors. The curriculum includes self-advocacy, community resources, and daily living skills (opening a bank account, renting an apartment, buying a car, etc.). Guest speakers from post-secondary institutions as well as community agencies provide information about adult services.

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State: *ID*

Tip 18

Have Students Fill Out Tips for Success. This document helps the student summarize his or her plans for the future and to advocate for himself or herself while transitioning to life after school. Documents are available online at http://www.shastacareerconnections.net.

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State: *CA*

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Tip 19

Share "An Amazing Self Advocacy" Story. Have a structured time each week for students to share his or her story. This might be problem-solving with public transportation, dealing with a stranger, speaking up for himself or herself at home, with friends, school or work, etc. Students who share a story get their names put in a hat for a "Fabulous Prize" drawing. This has evolved into a "share something you felt good about your response or behavior this week" as often students seem to give a story that is more about being a good citizen or a good friend. We then list their stories and the rest of the group will decide which category this "story" might fit. Categories include Good Citizen, Good Friend, Taking Care of Business, Good Boundary Setting, Good Employee/Work Ethic. The students get into it and come excited to share their stories. It's as helpful for the students to recognize the difference between the various "categories" their stories might fit which encourages all to participate by deciding which category. It's simple and takes no extra work (except the cheesy Fabulous Prizes!)

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State: *CO*

Tip 20

Follow the Example of the Southeast Idaho Youth Development Project. This project has four goals: 1) Creation of a dynamic environment in which transition-age individuals learn to become better self-advocates. 2) Promotion of heightened self-awareness of disability rights and related legal issues. 3) Fostering peer relationships between mentors and transitioning students and young adults. 4) Creation of a group of involved individuals who can participate in and support the 2008 Tools for Life conference [statewide transition conference]. A mixture a recreational and informational activities bonded a group of young adults with facilitators. Lifelong relationships have been formed and groups of speakers on transition and self-advocacy have been identified.

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State: *ID*

Tip 21

Develop a Student-run Transition Team. Student-run transition teams have been conceptualized as high school-based student groups comprised of 9th-12th graders, both with and without disabilities, who meet regularly to discuss preparing for adult life. These groups can be facilitated by the transition coordinator along with adult agency representatives to help students identify and prioritize areas of needed information. Student-run teams work together to find, invite, and work with guest speakers from the community, arrange field trips, and disseminate information to the larger student body. Student-run transition teams can be instrumental in youth self-directing instruction, learning planning and goal setting, and finding a peer group, and can be used as a way to inform Community Transition Teams.

Contact: *Patricia Noonan | pnoonan@ku.edu*
State: *KS*

Tip 22

Teach Your Students the Basics Regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act. They need more information about transition from school to work and their rights under employment provisions. Students with disabilities need to be empowered with basics regarding the ADA.

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State: *MD*

Tip 23

Have Students Interview their Special Education Teacher. Students find out all kinds of things — just who is this person, why did they choose this career, what is my disability, who do I go to for support, etc. It's a win-win for everyone. Interview your case manager.

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State: *NJ*

Tip 24

Recruit Students with Disabilities Who Are Currently in College. College students with disabilities can speak with high school students with disabilities (and their parents and teachers) who are interested in attending college. College students describe their disabilities, accommodations, and first-hand experiences at college.

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Dan Nordstrom | dnordstrom@wisc.edu
States: *RI, WI*

Tip 25

Provide Opportunities to Advocate. Students are given the opportunity to interact in all situations. The staff provides role playing, practice sessions, or assist with helping the students find the right words to relay information. Staff are available to help if needed by providing students with clarification or explanations.

Contact *none given*
State: *VA*

Tip 26

Have your Students Create PowerPoint Presentations.

Monica: PowerPoints can be used to store transition assessment information including work history, strengths, needs, preferences, and support needs. Students use these presentations to lead their own IEP meetings. Throughout the year, the students practice updating and presenting to the class and visitors!

Lisa: My daughter brings a PowerPoint of her IEP goals written in plain language to her IEP. She reads them to start the meeting. Pictures are included. We have used this method from 3rd through 8th grade and plan to continue throughout high school. If she is too shy to read that day, at least the team gets a feel for who she is.

Becky: This year students began creating PowerPoints to present at their Transition/IEP meeting. I provided them with an example (outline) which they could work from. The PowerPoint includes all areas of the IEP. Students had to include strengths, weaknesses, goals, dreams, disability, four-year plans, etc. They had to review their current IEP and evaluations to find information which needed to be included. It was interesting to see what the students knew about themselves and what they did not. They also had to speak with a teacher to include information about their progress in their classes. Students were aware that their PowerPoint was a work in progress and the goal is to have them completed prior to their next IEP/transition meeting.

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Becky McPherson | bmcpherson@grainvalley.k12.mo.us
States: *MD, IA, MO*

Tip 27

Truly Involve your Child in His or Her Transition Planning. My son Zach knew exactly what he wanted to do and had a plan for it — he wanted to be a welder. He had a plan for a scholarship. If no scholarship, he planned to join the National Guard because of their dollars to assist with his degree. Then he planned go to a junior college for a welding certification. Zach could not pass the ASVAB for the military; however, he did get a scholarship and has now completed his schooling and has a certification and graduated on the Dean's Honor Roll from Coffeyville Community College. Had I not included him and helped him make his own choices, he would not have been so head strong in doing what HE wanted to do!

Contact: *Kim Strunk | partnersinpolicy@alltel.net*
State: *KS*

Tip 28

Explain and Review with Students their Disabilities, Rights, and Accommodations. Reinforce the concept that the student needs to speak up for himself or herself in order to get what is needed, because it is no longer a given after graduation.

Contact: *Christine Oliver | christine_oliver@iu13.org*
State: *PA*

Tip 29

Interview All Students When They Enter 8th/9th Grade. This interview includes general questions, an employability scale and an interest survey to be used for job shadowing. I call the parents as a follow-up to the interview. This is the beginning of their portfolio that can grow into a senior project portfolio. I bring in career speakers and have a Q&A. The students enjoy the individual attention and the follow-up phone call to the parents gets them involved. I have had parents tell me that they never had the attention before.

Contact: *Pam Herron | herronp@iu1.k12.pa.us*
State: *PA*

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Tip 30

Students Need to Understand the Decisions They Will Face in Their Lives. I believe through role-play and hands-on learning, they will be able to use decision-making and self-advocacy to better prepare for their futures.

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State: *MO*

Tip 31

Hold a Youth Conference for Students. Use students as presenters in smaller sessions to talk to their peers about their job shadows, their use of technology, their ability to self determine and self advocate. Bring in other speakers students want to hear. Our conferences have grown in number from 100 to 250. Students ask to come back each year. Teachers and parents ask for the conference to be held again as their young people are so excited to attend.

Contact: *Rita Skiles | rskiles@esu11.org*
State: *NE*

tips for Transition Assessment

Tip 32

Use the Ansell-Casey Lifeskills Online Assessment for Independent Living Skills.

Use the Ansell-Casey Lifeskills Assessment to determine current knowledge and target learning opportunities. Educate parents about "teachable moments" and work the development plan. Start no later than age 12. Involve the youth and family even when they are reluctant or seem resistant. They get better as they gain experience. Using this tool, we have been able to get high school IEP case managers to engage in "age-appropriate transition assessment." Materials on the Web site are free: http://www.CaseyLifeSkills.org.

Contacts: *Scott Burlingame | burlings@dhw.idaho.gov*
Peter FitzGerald | pfitz@uoregon.edu
States: *ID, OR*

Tip 33

Create a Discovery Profile for Each Student.

Observation and work experiences are used to identify skills and preferences for each student. A discovery profile is completed for each student after observations at school, in the community, at home, and during a recreational activity. The information is then used to create a series of work experiences, internships, and part-time employment, and then to develop a customized transition plan from school to work. Each student leaves high school with a customized job, adult services, and transportation.

Contact: *Bill Phillips | bill.phillips@eku.edu*
State: *KY*

Tip 34

Use Questionnaires to Collect Data and Help in the Transition Process.

1) Parent transition questionnaire (sent prior to staffing).
2) Modified PATH (shorter version done one-to-one with student).
3) Transition questionnaire for students in high school.
4) Student questionnaire for students in 18-21 programming.
5) "Road to Independence" brochure for all students ages 14+ with IEPs.

Contact: *none given*
State: *none given*

Tip 35

Use a Variety of Strategies to Gather Information.

1) Take the time to get to know your students and build a good rapport with the student before you try to assess the student's abilities and interests.
2) Use surveys to help student determine interest and direction.
3) Often students are not able to effectively communicate their strengths and experience. I have found situational assessments to be very helpful (trying different work settings).
4) It has been very helpful to explore careers of interest through job shadowing.
5) Every year the transition team at my office (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation) sets up numerous job shadows to cover specific interests that students have shared.
6) The Department of Labor in Delaware has a One-Stop Center and One-Stop Mobile, which is equipped with career assessment tools (Career Scope) that measures interest and aptitude.
7) Delaware Technical Community College has a career assessment (DISCOVER), which is open for public use that also measures career interests.

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Beverly Powell | bpowell@kcmsd.net
States: *DE, MO*

Tip 36

Have Students Complete a Comprehensive Functional Vocational Evaluation (FVE).

Assessment—A comprehensive Functional Vocational Evaluation (FVE) for career pathway students.
Job Club (JC)—A 16-week psycho-educational group for work adjustment

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State: *NM*

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Tip 37

Use Concrete Vocational Assessment such as the Minnesota Spatial Relations Test. The Career Center of the Arlington (VA) Public Schools did two days of this testing with my son, and it was much more valuable than a two-week assessment by Voc Rehab. My son, who has autism, just graduated from college and has a full-time job doing computer-aided drafting. Without the vocational testing in 10th grade, we would not have know to steer him to technical drawing classes in high school, which led to college and his job.

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State: *none given*

Tip 38

The Berks County (PA) Transition Coordinating Council (BCTCC) Has Developed a Cross-Systems Transition Assessment Tool. This collaborative effort over several years involves special educators, agency representatives, family members, and representatives of postsecondary institutions. The tool gathers information needed for eligibility determination and service planning by adult agencies, as well as providing progress monitoring of key transition skills over the course of several years, in order to guide annual IEP planning. The tool is designed to be completed by student, family, and school every year. An electronic version is now being piloted. We will track whether more students who have used the CSA are connected with needed agency services one year after graduation as compared to a control group who did not use the CSA

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State: *PA*

Tip 39

PLAN Testing and Job Shadowing. Students explore career opportunities and are allowed a day out of school to do so. A follow-up survey provides feedback on the student's experience

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State: *MO*

tips for Assistive Technology and Universal Design for Learning

Tip 40

Use a Voice to Text Program such as "Dragon Naturally Speaking". The student with severe dysgraphia was interested in being a writer. He shared his stories in writers club and uses this program for some of his homework assignments.

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State: *KS*

Tip 41

Use Video Modeling to Teach Social Skills and Work-related Skills. Ideally, actors with learning disabilities should appear in the videos and demonstrate the skills to be taught. There is research supporting the use of video modeling for students with autism. Also, Imagination Stage, a local theater that provides acting training for teens and adults with LD, has successfully created job skill training videos featuring actors with LD and has presented them to local schools and disability providers. This program is called "Imagine Working."

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State: *MD*

Tip 42

Use Picture Technology. When preparing for interviews and IEP meetings for my students who are non-readers, I use assistive technology tools (such as Pix Writer (see http://www.slatersoftware.com) to enable the student to type answers, ideas, questions, and information on the computer — when it is printed, a picture is attached to the word to assist the non-reader to be as independent as possible. I have used this several times and the self-confidence of the student is obvious because they feel they are taking responsibility for themselves.

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State: *MO*

Tip 43

Have your Students Use a Word Processor. One readily available yet overlooked bit of technology is typing and the modern word processor. Students who can learn to type can often leave behind years of frustration with poor motor control that leads to poor letter formation. Every letter is legible! In addition, word processors provide students with spell check, grammar check, and often templates to write letters and other documents. Mastering this powerful tool will prepare students for writing in almost any setting, and they will often find that once you learn one word processor, all others operate in a very similar manner, which means that they can work at a library, school, home, or a relative's home.

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State: *NC*

Tip 44

Have Students Put Together a PowerPoint Presentation and Give an Oral Report. Transition topics students have given reports on so far have included car buying, the stock market, selecting a college, career reports, transitioning to the high school, and interview tips. A rubric is used and feedback is given about how to improve their PowerPoint or their oral presentation. Students present their PowerPoint to other high school and middle school students. Students are taught time management techniques to help them keep the audience's attention. Alumni have noted it is very helpful for college classes.

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tips for Disability-specific Transition

Tip 45

Encourage all Nurses to Participate in the Development of the IEP Related to the Student's Health Care Needs.
As a state consultant for school nurses, I encourage all nurses to participate in the development of the IEP related to the student's health needs. Across Kansas there are teen pregnancy prevention grants teaching human sexuality in the schools and in community settings. This is an effective way to prepare students with disabilities for development and adult life.
Contact: *Jane Stueve | jstueve@kdhe.state.ks.us*
State: *KS*

Tip 46

Have Students with Significant Intellectual Disabilities Create a PowerPoint Presentation. The presentation should outline their preferences, interests, needs and strengths, and their post-school dreams. Have them use this at planning meetings to assist the other team members in learning more about the student. Students can also create a PowerPoint for everything from individualized research to self-assessment in their Life Skills class. Students are presented with rubrics, and are instructed to author and present PowerPoints to their peers. All students who complete job shadowing or work experiences must create a PowerPoint, complete with photos from the work site, which includes a section on self-assessment. The PowerPoint can also be printed out in slide format to add to the student's portfolio. Students report that "it's cool" and they "really enjoy" it! I have noted a high percent (over 90%) of both participation in the task as well as task completion. It is something we have been doing now for two years, and intend to continue.
Contacts: *Nellie P. Aspel | naspel@clevelandcountyschools.org,*
Cindy Sause | csause@richmond.k12.mo.us
States: *NC, MO*

Tip 47

Teach Students and Their Parents How to Advocate Among Policymakers. Teach them about the political and funding process of adult agency supports and services. Have teachers and parents develop political awareness. Teachers, students, and families often need to be advocates and become aware of the political and funding process of adult agencies. Parents and teachers need to be aware of the change from a system that is mandated (public school under IDEA) to one that is eligibility determined, is poorly funded, and that can be overwhelming (financially, socially, politically, and physically) if they hope for their children matriculate into an adulthood more than a life in segregated services. Develop a relationship with your local government representative, your state senator, general assembly member, your member in congress. Let him or her see your face, know your name, meet your students/children. Work to have your representatives know that the matriculating adult is more than a daily rate/Medicaid Slot, that this is a person who wants a life like theirs.
Contact: *Fairfax County*
State: *VA*

Tip 48

Arrange Classroom Visits to Discuss Transition Options with Students. This year, I arranged classroom visits so that agencies can educate students with significant disabilities about transition and postsecondary options. Students are provided with information regarding services that are available to them after graduation. A representative from various agencies also comes in throughout the year to share info with the students. Students also work on career exploration activities during the classroom visits
Contact: *Melinda Brown | mbrown@caroline.k12.va.us*
State: *VA*

Tip 49

Create a Notebook of Important Paperwork for Post-Secondary Settings. For your students who are going onto a post-secondary setting, create a notebook for them with important paperwork to take with them. Include sections on rights and responsibilities; specific college information including the office of disability resources; determination of eligibility and severity of eligibility with proper documentation; vocational goal development; financial statements, medical records; and the last copy of their IEP accommodations with current testing as well as the summary of performance. At the back of the notebook include business cards for people they may need to contact. It helps students to have everything in one place.

Contact: *Martha Fidrych | Martha-f@earthlink.net*
State: *CO*

Tip 50

Send out Reminder Emails to High School Faculty to be on the Lookout for Students Who are Struggling. This is for students with disabilities attending post-secondary institutions. Every semester, about 10 working days before the undergraduate progress reports have to be turned into the registrar, I send out a reminder email to faculty to be on the lookout for signs that students are beginning to disengage from their coursework responsibilities for a given course, such as lateness in assignments, tardy/absences from class, lack of response to email from faculty, classroom behaviors indicating discomfort or distress, etc. I then share tips on how to encourage the students to come into the office during office hours in order to receive the necessary assistance and supports, such as a supportive note on a graded assignment, giving a specific time and day that professor would like to see that student.

Contact: *Donald Healy Jr. | DE-Healy@wiu.edu*
State: *IL*

Tip 51

After Giving Functional Transition, Use a Picture-based Speech Program for Students with Significant Disabilities. Narrow down their interest areas using assessments such as the Transition Planning Inventory (TPI) (http://www.proedinc.com/customer/productView.aspx?ID=875) and Your Employment Selection (http://www.yesjobsearch.com) and by interviewing them. Then, I would put out lots of pictures, and we would go through different parts of transition (independent living, job interests, social, etc.). The student and I would make a poster titled with the main question like "What do I have to have where I live in order to be happy when I grow up?", "What do I want to do that will help me be happy when I grow up?", etc., and would tape the pictures onto the poster. Once completed, the student and I would review their IEP goals, and choose one goal together. I would try to focus all other IEP goal ideas to fit somewhere within the "pictures." Then, at the student's IEP meeting, they would present their poster. It made it easier for students to lead their meeting and talk about their interests, and it was visually represented for everyone.

Contact: *Mary Pearson | mmpson@ku.edu*
State: *KS*

Tip 52

Non-reading Students can Complete "My Goals after School" Using Boardmaker. I took one of our transition assessments, "My Goals after School," and redesigned it using pictures in Boardmaker (http://www.mayer-johnson.com/MainBoardmaker.aspx?MainCategoryID=5419). Boardmaker is a software program that creates picture symbols to communicate. The changes made follow Kentucky's Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) requirements for students with moderate/severe disabilities. The redesigned assessments are used with nonverbal and non-reader students. This ensures students with significant disabilities have access to career transition information.

Contact: *Erica Price | erica.price@powell.kyschools.us*
State: *KY*

Tip 53

Use Visual Schedules with Your Students. I work with students of a wide range of disabilities and ages. I help them by working through visual schedules which increase their independence level. I found my visual schedule ideas through Linda Hodgens (http://www.usevisualstrategies.com/).

Contact: *Katherine Nelson | k4982@sbcglobal.net*
State: *MO*

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Tip 54

Use Picture Instructions to Teach Household Chores. When teaching household tasks such as cleaning (sweeping, vacuuming, folding laundry, etc.), cooking, or using small appliances (microwave, toaster, etc.) to adolescents with limited verbal abilities, use a series of picture instructions that model each step of the process. This can be individualized for each person, with the amount of steps in the sequence reflecting the learning style of the individual. Make sure you take the time to work with the individual at his or her pace, ensuring the student learns each step of the process and then chaining the pictures together so they can complete the entire task.

Contact: *Scott Mergl | oneparticular@hotmail.com*
State: *NY*

Tip 55

Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center Portfolios for Student Growth. This portfolio provides an excellent way for students to create and showcase their strengths and abilities. This website gives further information: http://ccdam.gallaudet.edu/pdf/PSG-07-26-06.pdf

Contact: *Linda Lamirande | linda.lamirande@esc16.net*
State: *TX*

Tip 56

Engage Students with Significant Disabilities in Transition Planning. This Web site (http://www.alife4me.com) includes information on person-centered planning ("Who Am I" and "Jobs For Me" profiles), self-determination (choice making and community exploration activities), and self-advocacy (journals and goal setting). A new Web site will be ready soon for middle school students with significant disabilities to begin thinking about life in the community after high school.

Contact: *Dana Yarbrough | dvyarbrough@vcu.edu*
State: *VA*

Tip 57

Develop Strategies for Increasing Co-worker Interactions with People who are Deaf-Blind. More attention should be put on strategies for interacting and associating effectively at the workplace with co-workers. Rehabilitation programs focus strictly on academics and job training and may ignore the issue of social interactions. Even if the person is able to do the work, isolation and frustration of not being able to interact well with others may make it impossible to enjoy working.

Contact: *Scott Stoffel | scottmstoffel@yahoo.com*
State: *VA*

Tip 58

Teach Students with Disabilities and/or Chronic Health Problems to Understand the Environment and Supports to be Successful. Students need to understand the rights and responsibilities as well as the pros and cons of disability disclosure. This focus should include the topic of health literacy and how students can participate, to the extent they are able, in the planning and carrying out of their health care needs and services. Self-determination starts with a healthy self!

Contact: *Susan Redmon | Susan_Redmon@doh.state.fl.us*
State: *FL*

Tip 59

Establish Summer Programs that Include Paid Internships for Youth who are Blind. Students can be involved in jobs of interest to them. Summer programs can be developed to teach independent living skills, orientation, and mobility. These are taught through mini-centers in locations across the state. Each mini-center works on basic cooking, safe travel by learning to use public transportation, budgeting, daily living skills, and self advocacy. The North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind also offers a college prep program for students attending college in the fall semester with emphasis on self advocacy, learning to use their individual adaptive technology, study skills, and research.

Contact: *David Arthur | David.Arthur@ncmail.net*
State: *NC*

tips for **Involving Families**

Tip 60

Have a Transition Night for Parents. This can be done a variety of ways. A panel discussion and Q&A afterward for parents and student to ask questions about the various transition programs and the adult agencies is one way. Another approach is a series of four workshop nights dealing with various topics. One night may be about how to prepare your child for post-secondary education. Another may be meeting with adult agencies and getting to know them better through their panel discussion and Q&A afterwards. Topics might include:

- Rights under IDEA
- Organizing records to ensure smooth post-secondary transition
- What is transition planning?
- What are Medicaid Waivers and how do you access them?
- What are post-secondary options for my child?

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Mary Visintainer | maryvisintainer@hotmail.com
Myrta I. Torres | mtorres@thearcofgreaterhouston.com
States: *GA, MO*

Tip 61

Invite Transition Specialists to Come and Speak During the School's Open House. I invite transition specialists to speak twice a year and have great attendance at both sessions.

Contact: *Jane Martin | jane.martin@cobbk12.org*
State: *GA*

Tip 62

Involve Siblings in the Transition Process by Starting a Siblings Group. Start a sibling group. The same issues that impact the parents (work, transportation, medical, services, financial, housing, SSI, etc.) can be important to adult siblings. Siblings who plan to be involved can benefit from knowing there are agencies, programs, assistance and support available for them.

Contact: *MurrayK. Fisher Ed.D. | fishrassoc@aol.com*
State: *IL*

Tip 63

Create a Movie to Document the Transition Process. When creating the movie, engage new partners, such as rehabilitation agencies, private industry, career and technical education, universities and other alternative high schools. Use the movie to document the transition process for students, teachers, and families. These movies have been used as a teaching tool for transition training at the regional and district levels, and they have been used by agencies to get to know the students better. The initial purpose of the movie was to engage and motivate students in transition and annual reviews.

Contact: *Juli Feldman | jfeldma4@schools.nyc.gov*
State: *NY*

Tip 64

Speak with Parents and Student Prior to the IEP/ARD Meeting. Call or make contact with the parents before the meeting and visit with the student before the meeting. Call the parents ahead of time and interview them on the phone so they won't feel as though they are being put on the spot at the actual meeting. Since rapport is already established, we end up having a productive dialogue at the meeting.

Contact: *Barbara Green | barbara.green@iisd.us*
State: *TX*

Tip 65

Offer a Three-session Workshop to Introduce Transition. The workshop is titled "Full Life Ahead" after the book we developed (see http://www.fulllifeahead.org). Each family received a copy of the book to keep as a resource. Dinner was provided to all and the 1-1/4 hour workshop followed.

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State: *VA*

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Tip 66

Encourage the Family to Begin as Early as Possible to Teach Independent Living Skills. Families can help students learn important skills such as learning to get up by themselves, prepare simple meals, manage money, shop for groceries and necessities, and other tasks of daily life. This will make independent living skills easier to apply when living at college or on their own. Begin promoting self-advocacy as early as possible, in doable bits, with increasing independence over time. Provide increasing independence for your student, and begin taking a greater "back-seat" or "cheerleader" role. Students with developmental disabilities need a longer transition period toward independence. Participate in a parental support-group in whatever format you find personally suitable — live groups, on-line forums, or email exchanges.

Contact: *Renee Lewis | redanlew@comcast.net*
State: *CA*

Tip 67

Compile a List of Email Addresses of Families and Providers Who Have Been Involved in Past Transition Activities. Use this list as a way to communicate your transition-related news and activities. We host four "transition support meetings" in the early evening every two months during the school year where we have guest speakers from agencies (social security, attorneys to speak on guardianship/special needs trusts, housing authority, etc.). We have a large list of email contacts of families who have participated in the past, and we send out notices when we have the speaker/agenda. At the first and last meeting, we ask participants to give us feedback regarding suggestions for future topics, days/times etc. We also send to all case managers asking them to distribute to families.

Contact: *Shari Malloy | malloy_sharon@stvrain.k12.co.us*
State: *CO*

Tip 68

Use a Checklist at the IEPs of Students Ages 18-21 to Provide the Student and Parents. This checklist can include things like contact the Division of Developmental Disability Services, Social Security contacts, guardianship options, transportation options, local adult service providers, etc.

Contact: *Bonnie Slentz | bonnie.slentz@cr.k12.de.us*
State: *DE*

Tip 69

Develop Transition Brochures and Tips Sheets. These materials can explain college, work, life skills, middle school, and initial placement in SPED. These can be given to families and students at their ARD/IEP meetings (http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/hrtw/YFS.pdf).

Contact: *Michele Tagliabue | mtagliabue@bastrop.isd.tenet.edu*
State: *TX*

Tip 70

Start Relationships with Families with a Positive Experience. One way to do this is by making a phone call home to each parent letting them know what a great start the child is off to. When there is a problem, I do not beat around the bush; I explain exactly what the issue is and I ask if the problem is noticeable at home also. If yes, then we come up with a consistent plan that the student can expect in both environments. There are times when a parent just does not know what to do, and then I ask another professional — a guidance counselor or school psychologist — for support. Basically, if you have open communication from the beginning, it makes those "sticky" situations a little easier to deal with on both sides.

Contact: *Nicole Davis | ndavis@kwcps.k12.va.us*
State: *VA*

Tip 71

Provide Information and Explain Acronyms Early and Often to Families. This can include SSI, power of attorney or guardianship, supported employment and vocational rehabilitation agencies.

Contact: *none given*
State: *VA*

Tip 72

Notify Parents at Least Two Weeks or More Before the Transition Meeting. Family schedules are usually packed; they need all the notice possible.

Contact: *none given*
State: *none given*

Tip 73

Be Available to Meet with Parents When They Are Available. In order to accommodate parents, it may occasionally be necessary nights and weekends. This is for the benefit of the student as well as for the parents so everyone is on the same page. It can be difficult and time consuming but the information gathered through these conversations is important.

Contact: *Daniel Clark | daniel.clark@dars.state.tx.us*
State: *TX*

Tip 74

Get Parents Involved Before the Student's 16th Birthday. At the 8th grade meeting have a special education teacher there to offer information. We also have a meeting to explain what transition is and what we do and need to do at the high school level to get the students prepared for post-graduation. At this meeting we have information about requirements for college, work, etc. To encourage more parental involvement we have the parents sign in for a prize so we know how many of the parents took the initiative to come and how many we need to get more involved.

Contact: *Judith Strassburger | judithstrassburger@wentzville.k12.mo.us*
State: *MO*

Tip 75

Listen to Families' Dreams for Their Child and Look for Ways to Connect Those Dreams to Transition. It does not matter what a child's disability is; what matters is the dream. Even if the school does not support the family's dream for transition because they don't think it's possible or realistic, or because it hasn't happened in that community, look for ways to connect long-term dreams to opportunities and programs that are available in the school setting and community. Our son is now working on IEP and transition goals at the local university under an agreement between the school and the university. Reach for the stars. It is better to aim high and miss then aim low, for you never know how high is possible until you try.

Contact: *Colleen F Tomko | colnchas@enter.net*
State: *PA*

Tip 76

Know the Student, The Family, and Their Circumstances. The more complete your knowledge is about the student and the community and agencies, the better the match.

Contact: *Judy Davidson | jdavids@hartdistrict.org*
State: *CA*

Tip 77

Have a Futures Night. A Futures Night involves information about vocational rehabilitation. Futures Nights can inform parents and students about transition-related issues, guardianship, and SSI.

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State: *MO*

Tip 78

Have Regular Contact with your Students' Parents. Make them feel comfortable so if they have any questions or problems, they can contact you to work on whatever problem comes up. Maintain a very open relationship so that parents trust that their child is getting the best education possible.

Contact: *Lisa Hagness | lhagness@hermsandf.com*
State: *MO*

Tip 79

As the Student Approaches 18, Host a Celebration. During the Celebration, you can discuss the successes and goals of the student, then each person commits to helping out in whatever way they can in order to help the student reach his or her goals of independence. Family feedback has been fantastic. The students feel that they are being supported and that their goals are reasonable and reachable. The community network is excited to be part of the process and to learn new ways that their expertise can be used to help.

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State: *Ontario, Canada*

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tips for Curriculum and Instruction

Tip 80

Provide Your Student with Driver Education Practice Exams and Study Sessions. Some students find it difficult to read the drivers manual and study from it. We take practice tests together and play questioning games to review. They say that they feel it helps them.

Contact: *Andrea Johnson | johnsona@clairton.k12.pa.us*
State: *PA*

Tip 81

Implement Community-based Instruction. Teach your students what the real world requires by involving them in community-based instruction programs to explore career avenues. It is also very important to involve students in self-advocacy so that in high school and beyond they are able to understand their learning differences and therefore are able to level the playing field. Finally, involve parents in the process by making sure there is continuous parental contact by phone and through workshops for parents and students since the high school personnel will not always be there in the transition process.

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Marshelle Long | mslong@kcmsd.net
States: *NJ, MO*

Tip 82

Start Teaching Transition Skills Early!

Janel: Introduce students as young as 6th grade to skills that could be used for future employment. Students at West Las Vegas Middle School are introduced to activities that will help them find future employment: such activities include sewing, laundry, cooking, filing, etc. The range of activities is as vast as the teacher's creative thinking.

Kristina: Begin talking to parents earlier, even in elementary school, in broad terms about services, agencies, and disability programs available in your community. I am from a large urban area. At 21 or 22, it is too late to begin agency connections. In our city it is not unusual for a person to have an eight-year wait for some services and three to five years on the waiting list for others. As you can see, the 6th grade is not too early to begin the transition process. Parents who are informed either through their own efforts or by connecting with other parents receive more services earlier and by graduation they have a plan of action in mind for issues of guardianship, employment, and long-term living arrangements.

Contacts: *Janel Williams-Salazar | janel_wlvms@hotmail.com*
Kristina Ray
States: *NM, TX*

Tip 83

Develop Job Shadowing Work Programs. One of the most important aspects of my transition program is giving juniors and seniors the opportunity to job shadow in areas that interest them. I have had several students decide on a program and college, thanks to job shadowing. We have seen students shadow veterinary technicians (including surgeries) and dinner theater (helping behind the scenes). Our local TV station allowed one of our students to work with a camera man. A young man this year will be attending Reading Area Community College to start his program in ultrasound technology, thanks to a job shadow. There are so many willing participants out there; they just need to be asked.

Contacts: *Lyn Stranix | lstranix@tulpehocken.org,*
Sue Sawyer | dcorbino@bentonville.k12.ar.us
State: *PA*

Tip 84

Self-Determination Curriculum. Use a self-determination/self-advocacy curriculum for all of your middle and high school students. The curriculum can be used with students without disabilities as well. This is a nine-week course where students learn about their disabilities, planning for the future, and how to advocate for themselves at school, in the community, and on the job. There is a student folder for each student and we use information from the folder for transition planning and IEP development. After the course students are able to successfully complete job interviews. Students have also stated they are less apprehensive about starting a job after the class.

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Kenneth Chip Boldt | Kboldt@pepcleve.org
States: *TN, OH*

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Tip 85

Have Your Students Develop a "Cottage Industry." This is where they are involved in the conception and follow-through of marketing a product. In our experience, the product took off like wildfire and we even included additional products to our business. Students were involved in the entire process. Parents also became involved and interested in the industry. Students developed employment skills in a very realistic setting. The product was sold not only within the schools but also within the community. The community became more aware of the unique talents and skills of our transition students.

Contact: *Donna Miers | donna.miers@bvsd.org*
State: *CO*

Tip 86

Teach a Unit Where your Students are Given a Three-bedroom House and a Budget. They then have to furnish the house with the use of a basic checklist and stay within the budget. The students must use fliers to find their housing items, write checks, and keep a check register.

Contact: *Myra Richards | myrarichards76@gmail.com*
State: *IL*

Tip 87

Develop Portfolios for a Senior Project. I had my seniors make a portfolio for their comprehensive final this year. In the portfolio, they had samples of job applications; resumes; sample addressing an envelope; a list of five references; an application for a rental agreement; a list of their goals for six months, one year, and five years; and letters of inquiry and thank you for a job interview. After grading each student's portfolio, I then placed a letter of recommendation inside for a job for them and mailed it home. This is a wonderful tool that will allow them to have all of this information in one folder for when they go out and apply for jobs.

Contact: *Julie Blair | jblair@usd409.net*
State: *KS*

Tip 88

Develop 18-21 Community-based Programs. An effective way to balance both the academic demands of high school and the need for students to learn specific transition skills is to develop community-based 18-21 programs. This way students can access the general curriculum with their peers during the traditional high school years and then work on transition goals in a community setting for one to three additional years to learn the independent living, employment, and sometimes even postsecondary education skills needed for adult life. After receiving the credits necessary to graduate, students may enter a community program (housed in an apartment) to learn adult living and employment/volunteer skills.

Contacts: *Amy Gaumer Erickson | aerickson@ku.edu*
Carol Larkin | clarkin@ssd.k12.mo.us
States: *KS, MO*

Tip 89

Create an Employability Skills Class. We do a section on the "most frequent question in a job interview" — that being, "What can you tell me about yourself?" The students fill out a template of basic information (typical stuff — address age, education etc.). Then we compete between classes to find who can generate the largest list of positive employment adjectives. Our list often tops 300. The employment world is filled with acronyms so we employ them in our classroom. We take our first names and turn them into acronyms such as MARK-Mature, Amusing, Resourceful, Kind. Their acronyms are made into cards that we hard-laminate for their wallets and purses. They now have words to describe themselves. Esteem building? You bet!

Contact: *Patrick Shinn | pshinn@westshore.edu*
State: *MI*

Tip 90

Teach Your Students about Community-based Recreation Services. Teach students how to access and use the exercise machines that are available in a fitness room of a community recreational center. To get to the facility we use our city transit system. This gives the students an exposure to the bus system that they will depend on when they graduate from school. At the recreation center we help students learn how to use the fitness equipment and become familiar with it. The goal of this activity is that they will develop enough confidence to continue to visit a fitness center in adult life.

Contact: *Joe Davis | SWATjdavis@centurytel.net*
State: *MO*

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Tip 91

Teach a Career Education Class to Complement a Work Experience. Due to this program, many students have graduated who may otherwise have dropped out.

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State: *MO*

Tip 92

Team Students with Disabilities with a Local Employer to Teach Them "Real World" Skills. Students spend one day a week during the school year dressing, working, and socializing as an employee. Students come from four different districts and different skill levels to find out if they have what it takes to work all day, adjust to a changing schedule, and work as a team at a competitive rate. I am part of a community collaborative program where the Jefferson Health Care Center welcomes student to learn about working in a health care facility. The volunteer program offers one credit hour and a whole lot more.

Contact: *Kayann Prochko | kayann.prochko@neomin.org*
State: *OH*

Tip 93

Use "The Transitions Curriculum." See http://www.stanfield.com/sch2wk.html. Use this curriculum as foundational material for a class at the high school level to teach transition knowledge and skills. The curriculum is applicable across several different transition "domains," from career planning to independent living and self-advocacy. It can be used with mixed ability levels. Like any curriculum, this is not the "end-all/be-all" tool but can be a pivotal resource. There are skills taught that align with academic standards, as there are reading, writing, research, math, and other academic skills embedded into the scope and sequence of the curriculum. A good teacher can adapt and apply materials, and there is enough content in the three volumes to last for a couple of school years and still not cover everything.

Contact: *Peter FitzGerald | pfitz@uoregon.edu*
State: *OR*

Tip 94

Have the Speech Therapist Work with the Students on How they Present Themselves to Others. Articulation, formulating responses, and fluency are important skills that have to be presented to others in a positive light.

Contact: *Amy Haselden | ahaselden@flo5.k12.sc.us*
State: *SC*

Tip 95

Use the Project Discovery Transition Planning Curriculum. See http://www.educationassociates.com. These kits offer a comprehensive way to introduce and instruct students with job skills. I have used two of the kits, Grocery Clerking and Cleaning Maintenance, and they were both very successful. All students showed an improvement in their understanding of the skills required to perform different jobs associated with each profession as demonstrated by their scores on the pre and post tests. These kits come ready to use with almost everything you need provided, including data collection sheets, picture symbols for non-readers, and step-by-step explicit instructions to follow.

Contact: *Holly Myers | myersh@kcsd.k12.sc.us*
State: *SC*

Tip 96

Have Students Complete an Independent Study on Self-Determination or Self-advocacy. This is for students who don't have room in their high school schedule to take a class. This independent study contains activities, readings, discussions, and videos related to their individual needs. It also requires them to schedule their own appointments, make five meals, and advocate independently with a teacher. The student earns independent study credit, but does have to miss class time. I have used it with several four-year post-secondary school-bound students. I have the students complete a reflection after their first semester of college. Most students mention that they had a better understanding of responsibility and themselves as a person with a disability.

Contact: *Laura Kadling | lkading@kimberly.k12.wi.us*
State: *WI*

Tip 97

Provide Students with a Community College Experience. The Berks County Transition Coordinating Council (BCTCC), with support from a grant through the PA Developmental Disabilities Council, supports students in the process of applying to college and documenting their disability and need for accommodations. These students also take the community college placement test and find out what particular academic skills they still need to develop. This enables the student and the IEP team to focus on these particular academic skills before the student graduates. The high school students attend a one-credit "College Success Strategies" course on-site at the community college. They learn study skills, time management skills, and note-taking and test-taking skills. They also gain experience accessing disability office supports and college resources as well as interacting in a college atmosphere — while they are still enrolled in high school. The course takes place after school (3:30–5:30 p.m.) for one semester.

Contact: *Mary Mazzoni | marmaz@berksiu.org*
State: *PA*

Tip 98

Provide Students with Tip Sheets. We have 13 different "Tip Sheets" that include Accessing The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Collaborative Communications Techniques, Developing an IPE, Dress for Success, Independent Living, Information and Resources Job Accommodations, Keys to A Successful Transition, The Rehabilitation Act, Self Determination, Supported Employment, Ten Tips For A Successful Interview, and Planning a Transition IEP Meeting. You can view them at http://www.fndfl.org/projects/tiles/Tilestip.asp

Contact: *Tara Bremer | tara@fndfl.org*
State: *FL*

Tip 99

Implement a Job Club. The job club meets weekly for one hour in the high school. This is an excellent format to instill self-advocacy and vocational skills. We use vocational and educational field trips, interview workshops, and self-advocacy and life skills training. We limit the job club size to fewer than 15 students. We work with local employers to hire and train the students once they graduate.

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Tip 100

Teach Your Students the "6 Ps." The "6 Ps" are Person-centered Plan, IEP, Practice (community-based learning and work experience), Career Portfolios, Presentation of your Portfolio, and Profession (land the job you want). It is individualized yet provides the educator with clear guidelines. This process interfaces well with adult employment provider and employer expectations. Students are prepared with clear goals, great experiences, and the ability to present themselves and their portfolios to employers.

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Tip 101

Implement Mentoring and E-mentoring Programs. These programs recruit mentors from local businesses who can be instrumental in supporting youth and provide experiences in youth development that promotes work skills, technology skills, and social growth. Research shows that many young people with disabilities have limited opportunities to be connected to caring adults who are not related to them or paid to be with them. Work-based mentoring that I have helped coordinate has led to increased engagement of youth in school, numerous work opportunities, heightened awareness of employers to the needs of youth with disabilities, and an overall increase in the workforce infrastructure between schools, state agencies, employers, and community organizations.

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Tip 102

Develop a Student Portfolio. This should start as early as elementary school. It can be a simple three-ing binder. Save "best work," photos of activities, academic successes, interviews with teachers/others, peer comments/activities, video, audio, etc. This can be used for IEP meetings, eventual job opportunities and college applications. Parents and students have reported using their portfolio materials as a resource at team meetings to raise expectations of their teachers and speak to their goals. A few used pieces for job applications. One parent in particular took this tip and developed a portfolio with her son who used assistive technology to move and communicate. His mom said they changed from "thinking he would never do too much, to thinking he could do anything he put his mind to!" A very powerful change, indeed!

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Tip 103

For Transition to High School, Use an 8th Grade Portfolio. This is an 8th grade assignment with writing samples, photos, art work, certificates, and stickers representing areas of interest from every year of school. It is a wonderful keepsake and a useful tool for new teachers as a conversation starter and an introduction for an incoming student.

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Tip 104

Keep Some College Textbooks On Hand. Approach your local community colleges and ask for discontinued books that you can get for free or buy low cost. Books should represent a broad base of programs at the community college. As students, families, and special education teachers are talking about possible college programs, you can provide a sample text book that the student would be expected to utilize for them to review.

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tips for Interagency Collaboration

Tip 105

Help Students Apply to Summer Camps through Local Colleges or Community Organizations.

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Tip 106

Hold a Transition Fair Each Year. The fair includes service providers, break-out sessions covering various topics (i.e., guardianship issues) and a panel presentation with community service providers (i.e., vocational rehab, etc.), as well as general information for parents.

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Tip 107

Use the Children with Special Health Care Needs Transition Posters and Handouts. These encourage families and professionals to include transition planning as a component of the clinic visit.

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Tip 108

Organize and Host a Social Security Online Workshop at your High School. A representative from Social Security comes to the school and works with the families and students to complete their applications.

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Tip 109

Organize a District Transition Team Made up of Teachers, Administrators, and a Parent Mentor. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss various aspects of a student's transitions and needs starting in the 8th grade. We have meetings to learn more about every aspect that students with special needs and their families might need to know as they prepare to exit high school. Each teacher then has future planning meetings separate from the IEP, with the family and the IEP team. We start the meetings in 8th grade and have one every year to discuss various aspects of a student's transitions and needs.

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Tip 110

Have your School Counselors and Other Education Professionals Complete the Module, "School Counselors: Facilitating Transitions for Students with Disabilities from High School to Post-School Settings." This is available at the the IRIS Center Web site — see http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/cou2/chalcycle.htm.

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Tip 111

Develop and Distribute a Community Resource Guide each Year. This guide is for exiting students designed to be a quick reference to community resources including phone numbers and Web sites plus a brief description of the services provided. Our division develops and distributes a community resource guide each year for exiting students called the RISE Guide ("Reaching Independence through Self-Empowerment"). This is a quick reference to community resources including phone numbers and Web sites plus a brief description of the services provided.

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Tip 112

Form a Community-based Transition Team. Be sure to include representatives from school districts, post-secondary institutions, and government agencies such as Department of Labor, Commission for the Blind, and Vocational Rehabilitation. These groups should work together to provide resources and opportunities to students in transition. Every year we update an extensive resource directory that is used not only by students and their families but by a variety of professionals who provide transition counseling services. This team can offer presentations at local schools, spearhead Disability Mentoring Day activities, and share information with one another so that we can each be more effective in helping students and clients make successful transitions to adulthood.

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Tip 113

Utilize State Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors who Specialize in School-to-Work Transition. Referring students to vocational rehab during their junior year allows time for the VR counselor to assist with transition and career planning. VR can also provide ongoing support to the clients following high school graduation to help them succeed in getting ready to get a job, getting a job, and keeping a job.

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Tip 114

Organize a Peer Mentoring Group in your High School for Students with Disabilities. In the group the students learn about their disability, accommodations, and strengths. They sponsor a workshop of the 8th graders in the spring. It is sponsored by Michigan Rehab services and our ISD.

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State: *MI*

Tip 115

Have your Classroom in a Community Agency Building. This will help students become familiar with community agencies and the services they provide.

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State: *MI*

Tip 116

Partner with Mental Health, MRS, and School System to Provide Paid Training for Individuals with Disabilities.

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Tip 117

Collaborate with Parent Training and Information Centers or Other Community Based Organizations to Provide Parent Training Workshops on Transition. Parents are often the first and most knowledgeable "case manager" a young person will have. Parents also often take the lead in the transition planning process for their youth. Unfortunately, there are not set mechanisms to make sure parents get the information they need to help their youth make informed choices about accessing adult services, employment, or entering postsecondary education. Parent Training Centers, experts at conducting effective parent workshops, can be a valuable partner in informing families about rights, responsibilities, and services available for adults with disabilities. PACER Center in Minnesota has been conducting parent training workshops on the area of transition for years. In many cases the response from parents is the same, "Thank you, nobody told us about these services and resources." I would suggest structuring workshops that address the nuts and bolts of County Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, SSI and other Social Security programs, as well as highlighting such resources as Centers for Independent Living, disability specific organizations, and Workforce Centers. You will find that professionals will gravitate towards these sessions because they are not usually offered this information in a usable format either. These sessions also provide a great opportunity for interagency collaboration. For example, you can invite a vocational rehabilitation counselor to speak about their program, thus helping them build contacts and spread the word about their services. Parent workshops can be designed to address all sorts of topics including building a transition- focused IEP, entering employment, or exploring guardianship. Parent workshops give parents the knowledge necessary to help their youth make informed decisions about their future.

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State: *MN*

Tip 118

Encourage and Help Teach Students how to Access Outside Services while Still in School. They could be mental health, developmental disabilities, vocational rehabilitation, or even just access to outside agencies or non profit organizations that provide services such as advocacy, self-advocacy, and recreational opportunities. Involvement in such community groups can increase self-confidence and make one a known member of their community.

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State: *MT*

Tip 119

Get to Know Professionals from the Other Side of the Fence.

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State: *NV*

Tip 120

Hold a "Dine and Discuss" Forum with Parents and Students. After a lovely dinner and keynote speaker, families are given a choice of seven break-out sessions to attend. They are invited to sit in on various sessions involving local agencies to begin to make those bonds early on (starting in middle school).

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Tip 121

Follow the Example of Oregon's Youth Transition Program (YTP). See https://www.ytporegon.org. This is an innovative partnership, using shared funding, with local school districts' dollars used to capture Federal Match for Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services, creating transition specialists in funded districts. Transition specialists focus on transition services for individual students and work as agents of both the school district and Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services to engage students in employment, training/education, or some combination of those two things as the student transitions from high school. Extraordinary outcome results occur and are documented following 12 months of follow-up.

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State: *OR*

Tip 122

Have Regular Visits from Your DRS Representative. Our DRS rep visits our school from noon to 2 p.m. on the first Thursday of every month. This provides an opportunity for him to meet with students, teachers, and parents at a convenient location. In the fall, I invited a representative from various area agencies to attend an informational session for SPED teachers and administrators. The session allowed teachers an opportunity to learn more about services provided in the community.

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Tip 123

Partner with a Local Non-profit Bakery that can also Serve as a Job Coaching Vendor for Adults with Disabilities. The opportunity allows six school-age students to participate in a non-paid work experience program at the bakery while establishing a rapport with DRS and the agency as a potential vendor for services once they exit the public school division.

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Tip 124

Have your Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Representative Visit your School to Meet with Seniors Monthly During the Last Semester. You can also take your students to the local community college to become familiar with the environment and resources. The local community college also works with the local schools to facilitate placement testing.

Contact: *none given*
State: *VA*

Tip 125

Establish an Interagency Agreement Involving Three State Agencies — Department of Public Instruction, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Department of Health & Family Services. A companion piece to the agreement is a Transition Action Guide that includes a process model that helps to build the relationships and collaborations necessary for successful transition.

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Tip 126

Dane County Human Services, WI DVR, and County High Schools Have an Interagency Agreement that Provides for Continuous Vocational Services and a Guarantee of Support for Exiting Students with Paid Jobs. These young men and women will circumvent any waiting list that may exist if they are in ongoing, stable, and paid integrated employment.

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Tip 127

Have a Division of Rehabilitation Counselor Assigned to Your School. They have offices or desks in rooms and are included in IEP meetings when the student turns 16 if not before. This makes it easy for school counselors and school nurses also to refer students who are not in special education for services.

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Tip 128

Partner with Businesses and Other Government Agencies to Provide Real Jobs, both Summer and After-school. "Youth employment is the norm in American society; according to the National Research Council approximately 80% of youth hold jobs during high school. However, only 15% of youth with ASD are similarly employed, the lowest rate of any major disability category." (The quote is from the just-released report of the NH Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders, DHHS.state.nh.us/DHHS/BDS, which references "Cameto, C. et al. Reports from the National Longitudinal Transition Study. (2003)"

Contact: *none given*
State: *none given*

Tip 129

Establish an Interagency Cooperative. We have a 25-member interagency cooperative (Oconee Transition Planning Cooperative, OTPC).

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Tip 130

A Way to Expose Families to Their Choices and Help Facilitate Early Linkages is to Host a "Meet and Greet" for Families and Adult Agencies. This is not your typical transition fair. The students and their families rotate around the room to meet one-on-one with representatives from the agencies and discuss their unique strengths, needs, preferences, and goals. The CRPs are given profiles on each of the students ahead of time and are encouraged to talk about how their agency can meet the needs of the student. Students and families are given suggested questions, organizing binders, and reflection journals to fill out to keep track of what they learn. This round-robin format allows families to meet with a number of agencies in a short amount of time.

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State: *MD*

Tip 131

Assist Parents in Connecting with Service Providers Such as Developmental Disabilities Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc. Invite the vocational rehab person to your school and have appointments scheduled so he or she can see more families in one day. Also families are comfortable with coming to our office and we have the necessary documentation such as psychological and IEP.

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State: *IN*

Tip 132

When you Have your IEP Exit Meeting Invite any Post-Secondary People that the Student Feels Will Want to Know the Information in their IEP. We have the vocational rehab representative and/or college counselor.

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State: *MO*

Tip 133

Establish an Interagency Agreement with the School District and County Human Services. This agreement provides seamless support/services to students graduating with a job. Throughout the student's last year of attendance, school and adult agency staff are making sure successful transitions occur without any eligibility restrictions or cessation of services upon graduation.

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Tip 134

Form a Transition Advisory Council, Made Up of Parents, Teachers, Administrators, and Service Providers Who Meet Monthly to Discuss Transition Needs in Your District. We have planned several events to encourage students and parents to get involved in transition planning. Transition Night is one of those events where parents and students are invited to attend to gain information needed on transition. We target students who will be going straight to work after high school. Vocational rehabilitation, DDSN, York Tech, military branches, parent/student advocacy groups, Rock Hill Parks/Recreation, a representative from SSI, and several other agencies are available to give information to parents. Sometimes light refreshments are served — last year it was held near a small restaurant and a discount was given to families who attended our event. Door prizes are also given out. We also have a College Success Tools Workshop where students and parents learn what resources are available for financial help for students with disabilities and how to get the accommodations needed while in college. This is held at York Technical College — students take a tour of the facilities eat lunch on campus. At Clover High School, we have a district diploma program, ASSETS, which prepares students for employment. Students abilities, skills, and interests are accessed. Students take classes in the areas of math, English, science, social studies, and career preparation to develop the skills needed to be a good employee. We also have a freshman focus class which concentrates on self-advocacy and self-determination. Students will be able to state their disability, what helps them learn, their strengths and weakness, and how they can overcome their weaknesses. Students also learn how to access help in the community when needed. In the junior and senior year, students complete community-based training according to their interests and ability levels. The goal of the program is to find employment before students graduate. During their junior year, students and parents meet with vocational rehabilitation counselors to become clients of VR. This makes a smooth transition after graduation.

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