



Learning Times

School-to-Work Transition

Research indicates that youth experiencing learning disabilities are potentially at risk for serious life challenges. According to the National Center for Learning Disabilities, 35% of students identified with learning disabilities drop out of high school. Studies examining the post-high school results of students with disabilities have found that a large proportion of these students do not go on for further training. Learning disabilities are associated with lowered educational and occupational achievement. Additionally, youth with learning disabilities often do not receive needed post-secondary supports and services and as adults are not as successful when compared to the general population (Blackorby, & Wagner, 1996; Wagner, 1991; Wagner, 1993).

Federal and state laws such as Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, also known as IDEA '97, ensure that children and youth with disabilities not only have access to a free appropriate public education, but also provide measures that strive to improve results of that education for all children with disabilities. A significant component of this law, called transition planning,

is designed to prepare children and youth for post-secondary education, employment and independent living, and to make a smooth transition from the world of school to adulthood.

In order to improve post-high school outcomes, the student's educational program can no longer be provided in isolation from other areas of the student's life, such as community living, working and social factors. Meaningful connections to the workplace, community resources and post-secondary educational institutions augment both academic and career preparation and allow relevant learning for at-risk students (Mooney, Crane, Transcen, 2002). Appropriate transition must begin early and incorporate activities and linkages both in and out of the school/academic environment.

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Building learning success
for children, families,
schools & communities

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Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota

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The transition requirements of IDEA '97 have three major basic components:

1. Students and their families need to think about goals for life after high school and then develop a plan to “get there”.
2. Students should have access to experiences that ensure the student gains the skills and competencies needed to achieve his or her desired post-high school goals.
3. Students and families need to identify and link to any needed post-high school services, supports, or programs before the student exits the school system.

Five Areas of Transition Planning

The Five Areas of Transition Planning Mandated by Public Law 105-17 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA '97) include:

- Independent Living
- Recreation and Leisure
- Community Participation
- Jobs and Vocational Training
- Postsecondary Education



A Good (or Best Practice) Transition Program Should Provide Two Important Things:

1. Curriculum that includes self-advocacy skill training (learning styles and accommodations, needs awareness, work styles, job interests, next steps/future plan).
2. Community-based programming that includes access to organizations, jobsites, colleges/training programs, and resources that support transition.

Education and appropriate transition planning are the keys to life-long self-sufficiency and economic independence.

Ideally, curriculum and self-advocacy skill training are part of a community-based experiential learning program that offers students an opportunity to explore their future options for adult life, employment, and postsecondary education. Some examples: students learn how to open and maintain a bank account, take a college placement test and/or gain work experience through either a paid or non-paid internship at a local business.

LDA's Parenting Corner

What Parents Can Do to Help Prepare for Transition Planning

Grade Nine

- Become aware of the transition components of the IEP
- Discuss career plans, options, and dreams with your child
- Review with your child the necessary requirements for high school graduation
- Become aware of career exploration opportunities in school and in the community

Grade Ten

- Review student's academic plan, performance and progress with outlined goals and objectives
- Attend a transition career fair
- Assist youth in participating in job-shadowing opportunities
- Begin exploring post-secondary education options such as technical, vocational, community or 4-year colleges or training programs, particularly looking for postsecondary programs that will offer both the curriculum and necessary level of disability-related support services

Grade Eleven

- Check on college entrance requirements, exam dates, and registration procedures
- Review your school's graduation requirements and IEP goals
- Check on financial aid (FASA) and scholarship opportunities
- Begin visiting potential post secondary education institutions
- Attend college fairs
- Begin exploring possible adult service providers

Grade Twelve

- Make sure your son or daughter has an up-to-date, full diagnostic evaluation
- Assist with the application process to a training program or post-secondary education program
- Seek out support services in college or career training programs
- Review current IEP goals & objectives
- Determine entrance requirement needs to adult service providers

Additionally, throughout the high school years:

1. Encourage your child to have regular "check ins" with their school guidance counselor and case manager
2. Communicate confidence in your son or daughter's ability to be successful in post secondary settings
3. Encourage independence and self-advocacy skills (see Self Advocacy article on next page)

Self-Advocacy and Transition

Communicating your needs effectively involves a number of factors. Students with disabilities who succeed in postsecondary education generally possess the following characteristics:

- Ability to articulate one's talents and abilities clearly.
- Knowledge of the nature of one's disability, and the kinds of teaching strategies, tools, and services that best help one compensate.
- Ability to explain both talents and needed compensatory strategies, clearly and frankly, to others.
- Maturity and initiative to assume the greater share of one's own advocacy.
- Adherence to routine, effective study habits, to whatever degree is necessary.
- Acceptance of and initiative to seek assistance for academic and other problems, as appropriate.
- Acceptance of the idea that it may take longer to graduate than one's friends, and that he/she may have to study harder than friends.
- Recognition of the concept that postsecondary education is meant to be a challenge and those temporary frustrations are a part of the normal growth process.
- Regular, frequent communication with parents, friends, classroom professors, academic advisors and support personnel.



It has also been observed that the college-level student with a disability must be self-reliant and able to cope with the ever-changing challenges of daily living. Students with disabilities who have learned to rely heavily on both parents and teachers to direct them and manage their lives may have difficulty adjusting to the demands of college life. Thus, as a student, the task is to find a college or training program that will stretch and develop talents, interests, and abilities, while at the same time is respectful and supportive of needs.

A good source of information on colleges who have exemplary support services for students with disabilities is: *The K & W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD: A Resource Guide for Students, Parents, and Professionals*. (New York, Princeton Review: 2002). This guide can be found at most high school career centers or public libraries.

LDA's Transition Services

For over 17 years, LDA has provided individual consultation services, career seminars, and transition planning to high school students as part of our Transition Connections Program. LDA's transition services supplement special education services provided by school districts through contractual agreements. Additionally, several foundations and corporations generously provide grants to support and sustain LDA's transition programming.

LDA's transition services better prepare students for transitions to post-secondary training or employment by promoting students' self-awareness, self-advocacy, and career knowledge.

Currently, LDA's Transition Coordinator helps students to identify their educational needs, to develop effective work plans, and to understand workplace experiences to help them meet their personal, educational, and employment goals in the Minneapolis and Edina Public School districts. Through regular student/counselor meetings and workplace tours, students develop work readiness skills, learn about opportunities for employment, increase awareness of workplace expectations, and learn how to access post-secondary education options.

LDA can work with your school district to set up a comprehensive package of services to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities in your community. If you would like to learn more about LDA's Transition Connections Program for your school or district, please call Lori Boynton at 952-922-8374 ext. 113.

Transition Resources and References:

Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota
www.ldaminnesota.org

Successful Strategies for College-Bound Students with LD
www.ldaonline.org/ld_indepth/transition

Transition Planning: A Team Effort #TS10, 1999
<http://nichcy@aed.org>

Transition and Self-Advocacy
www.ldaonline.org/ld_indepth/transition/transition_self_advocacy.html

U.S. Department Of Education, Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities (2002)
www.ed.gov/search/disabilities

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
www.ncset.org

New Staff Join LDA!

LDA of Minnesota is pleased to welcome two new staff members, Lori Boynton as a second Program Director and Rico Her as the Transition Coordinator. Due to agency growth, Boynton will be overseeing program operations and direction for youth and adult services programs and Her will serve as a coordinator of all transition services.

Boynton has more than twenty years experience in education as a special education teacher, classroom teacher, and public school administrator. She holds a B.A. in Special Education and English Literature from Mankato State University and has completed extensive graduate work in special education and educational policy and administration at the University of Minnesota. Besides teaching, she has nine years of experience as a teacher on special assignment in administration, where her duties included hiring, training and supervising teachers, creating and implementing programs, and building community partnerships.

Rico Her, our new Transition Coordinator, joined LDA in August of 2003. With a Master's Degree in School and Career Development Counseling from California State University, Sacramento, he is a great addition to our transition services program. Rico also has experience in community advocacy development, outreach, and counseling. Since joining the LDA team, Rico has become an active member of several CTIC (Community Transition Interagency Committees) in Hennepin County, serving on several work committees.

LDA is Seeking Board Members

LDA welcomes individuals from varying backgrounds, skills and experiences. At present, LDA is committed to expanding its diversity; people of color and individuals or families with learning disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Roles and responsibilities:

- Develop strategic direction
- Establish and monitor board policy
- Maintain fiduciary responsibility
- Attend board meetings
- Promote LDA within your personal and professional network and the community
- Financially support LDA and assist in fund raising
- Provide advice and counsel in your area of expertise

Time commitment:

- Bi-monthly board meetings
- Committee work
- Renewable three-year terms

Call Kitty Christiansen, Executive Director at 952-922-8374 if you or someone you know is interested in becoming a Board Member at LDA.

LDA is Seeking Public Awareness Volunteers

LDA is looking for passionate volunteers to assist the agency in its public awareness efforts at conferences and community exhibits. Knowledge of learning disabilities is helpful. Parents of children with learning disabilities are strongly encouraged to volunteer. Please contact Martha Moriarty, Marketing Director at 952-922-8374 for more information.

Make This a Summer of Success at LDA!

LDA has two options to help your child succeed this summer:

Summer of Success Day Camp

Summer of Success is for students with learning difficulties or learning disabilities entering grades 2-6. Small groups consist of 4-6 students grouped by academic need and instruction is individualized for each student. Basic skills instruction is offered in reading, math and writing. Each session is 90 minutes long and meets two days a week for 6 weeks. A skill assessment is included for each student.

Sessions will be held:

July 19th – August 26th

8:30 –10:00 or 10:30 – 12:00 noon

Monday – Thursday

You can choose your days and times!

Sign up for more than one group!

Fee: \$260.00 for each group
Limited scholarships available

Call (952) 922-8374 to **register** over the phone
or register online at:
www.ldaminnesota.org/services/services.html

One-to-One Tutoring

One - hour individualized tutoring sessions meet two times each week for eight weeks. Students are matched with LDA's teaching staff according to their needs, skills and interests. Together with parents and students, LDA's teachers develop and personalize an education plan.

One-to-one tutoring is available all summer!

Monday – Thursday 12:30 – 4:30

Fee: \$48.00 per session
Limited scholarships available

Call (952) 922-8374 to **register** over the phone
or register online at:
www.ldaminnesota.org/services/services.html



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Visit us on the web!
www.ldaminnesota.org

Become a member of LDA!

LDA of Minnesota is the state affiliate of LDA of America. As a member of LDA, you will receive:

- Access to the latest information and research on learning disabilities
- Complimentary subscriptions to LDA's local and national newsletters
- A chance to connect with others who have similar interests

Member information:

Name _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

I am interested in:

- Individual Membership \$30
 Journal Subscription (members only) \$30
 Journal Subscription (non-members) \$60

Subtotal \$_____

LDA relies on the generosity of our members and the community to provide information and services that advance our mission.

I want to help LDA, I have enclosed a contribution to support LDA's mission \$_____

Total \$_____

Method of payment:

Check (payable to LDA)

Visa Mastercard

Card number _____

Exp. date _____/_____/_____

Signature _____

Contributions to LDA are tax deductible

So that we may better serve you, please consider providing us the following OPTIONAL information.

I am a:

Person with Learning Disabilities

Professional Family member Other

Please mail completed application along with payment to:

LDA of Minnesota

4301 Highway 7, Suite 160

Minneapolis, MN 55416

ph: 952-922-8374 www.ldaminnesota.org

LDA is a private, non-profit, educational agency that specializes in helping children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities or other learning difficulties maximize their potential so that they and their families may lead more productive and fulfilled lives.

