



DISABILITY
RIGHTS
SOUTH CAROLINA

Preparing for Life After School

AutismConnect Conference 2025

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Link to PowerPoint

<https://qrco.de/bfo9ey>



Our Mission

To protect the legal, civil, and human rights of people with disabilities in South Carolina.

- Enable individuals to advocate for themselves.
- Advocate on the individual's behalf when they've been discriminated against or denied a service to which they are entitled.
- Educate the public, stakeholders, and policymakers about laws that protect individuals with disabilities.
- Promote policies and services that advance those rights and interests.



About DRSC

- Non-profit providing services statewide.
- Independent of agencies that provide treatment or other services to people with disabilities.
- DRSC is the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency for South Carolina.
- As the P&A for SC, DRSC is mandated by state and federal law to protect the rights of people with disabilities in SC.
- There are 57 P&As nationwide in all states, districts, and territories.



School Transition

**True or False: Life after
school is something that I
will need to navigate on my
own**



What topics might school transition planning cover?

- Postsecondary/continuing education
- Employment
- Living as independently as possible
- Participating in the community



What age does transition planning start in SC?

1)13

2)16

3)18



IDEA Transition Requirements

- In SC, planning begins with the first IEP in effect when a student turns 13
- Assess the student's needs and develop transition goals:
 - Age-appropriate assessments/evaluations (informal and formal)
 - Develop appropriate measurable post-secondary goals
 - Review/update at least annually



Transition Services

- Include services needed to help reach post-secondary goals on the IEP
- A “coordinated set of activities” to help prepare the student for life after school
- Based on child’s individualized needs
- Includes: instruction, related services, community experiences, development of employment objectives, daily living skills, and functional vocational evaluation



Involve the Student

- Invite the student to the transition IEP meeting
- If the student cannot attend, then the team must find other ways to ensure the student's interests and preferences are discussed and considered



Invite Others Who Might Help

- What state agencies may provide or pay for transition services (with consent)?
 - South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD)
 - South Carolina Commission for the Blind (SCCB)
 - Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN)
- If the agencies fail to do this, an IEP meeting should be reconvened to determine other ways to meet the transition objectives in the IEP



Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Transition

- SC has two VR agencies
 - SCVRD
 - SCCB
- VR can work in conjunction with school districts to provide various transition services.
 - Some require an open case with VR, while others can be provided through Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).



Age of Majority

- At the age of 18, all decision-making rights under IDEA transfer from the parent to the student.
- Adult Students with Disabilities Educational Rights Consent Act



Post-Secondary Education



True or False:

If I have an IEP in high school, it will transfer to college.



Life After School Is Different!

- Students with IEPs who move on to postsecondary education and/or work will not receive accommodations the way they were determined in public school.



High School versus Postsecondary Education

- High School

- School district has a responsibility to identify students with disabilities
- School district must evaluate the student
- Parents are usually the decision makers

- Postsecondary

- Students must self-identify if accommodations are needed
- May need to provide documentation of disability
- Students are the decision makers



Contact Disability Support Services (may go by different names)

- Student has the burden to:
 - Request accommodations and/or modifications;
 - Provide reasonable documentation of disability if needed; and
 - Provide documentation of the need for the accommodation/modification if needed



Request Tips

- Reasonable accommodations can be requested any time
 - The earlier, the better
 - Follow the school's procedures
 - Let the school know ASAP if the accommodation is not working



True or False:

**Post-secondary schools are
required to provide the
accommodations I request.**



Keep in Mind

- Postsecondary schools are not required to:
 - Fundamentally alter the nature of the program or
 - Create an undue burden
- In these instances, the school must try to find an alternate accommodation



VR and Post-Secondary Education

- VR can assist with post-secondary education in several different ways
 - Can provide financial assistance for certification or degree programs (this includes advanced degrees)
 - Can provide assistive technology to enable student to access the campus, curriculum, or other



Transition Tips for Postsecondary Education

- Meet with your child's high school counselor
- Discuss with the IEP team
- Research schools/degree programs your child is interested in
- Self-advocacy skills
- Knowledgeable about disability and needs that may arise in postsecondary education
- Becoming familiar with postsecondary disability services office and practice requesting reasonable accommodations



Employment



Workplace Barriers

- When individuals with disabilities reach employment, they sometimes encounter a workplace barrier due to their disability in the application process, performing their job, or accessing a privilege or benefit of a job just like other employees. In this case
 - The applicant or employee can request a “reasonable accommodation” from the employer.
 - Accommodations are not automatically provided by the employer.



True or False:

**Accommodations can be
used for workplace parties
or other events.**



Reasonable Accommodations

- An adjustment or modification that enables the applicant/employee with a disability to:
 - Apply for a job
 - Perform the essential functions of their job
 - Enjoy the benefits/privileges of their job like their co-workers (ex: training/social events)
 - Can include making facilities accessible



Not Reasonable Accommodations

- Eliminating an essential job function
- Lower production/performance standards
- Personal use items used on and off the job (ex: hearing aids, wheelchair)
- Requests that are an “undue hardship”



When can accommodations be requested?

- 1) when an interview is scheduled**
- 2) once the job offer is made**
- 3) when a need arises**
- 4) all of the above**



Requesting a Reasonable Accommodation

- Can be requested at any time
- May come from the applicant, employee, or another person
- There is no exact language. The employer needs to be told that an adjustment/change is needed because of their disability.
- Does not need to be in writing, but we suggest that it is. See Job Accommodation Network sample:
<https://askjan.org/media/accommrequestltr.cfm>



Once the Request is Made

- The employer should engage in an “interactive process”
- Informal process to clarify needs and identify a reasonable accommodation
- Employer may request more information about the disability if not obvious. This is limited to documentation that establishes the disability and the need for the accommodation.



VR and Employment

- VR can assist with employment in many ways.
 - Help finding a job (includes vocational assessments)
 - Help with assistive technology and requesting reasonable accommodations
 - Help with initial purchase of work related uniform items



Transition Tips to Prepare for Employment

- Vocational assessment
- Assistive technology
- Involve SCVRD or SCCB in transition planning
- Community experiences/exploring types of work
- Resume/interviewing skills
- Self-advocacy skills
- Knowledgeable about disability and appropriate times to disclose
- Becoming familiar with accommodations and practice requesting reasonable accommodations



Other Resources

- Adult Students with Disabilities Educational Rights Consent Act
- School Transition Services
- VR Services for High School Students
- When Your Child Grows Up: The Legal Effects of Becoming an Adult



Disability Rights South Carolina

Help Line: 1-866-275-7273

TTY: 1-866-232-4525

info@disabilityrightssc.org

WWW.disabilityrightssc.org





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