

Session 3

Getting to know **you** – Your preferences & interests

WHOSE FUTURE GOAL 3: You will identify some of your own transition needs that are based on your preferences and interests.



Let's see how well you listen to yourself when you work on this stuff!

Fill in the blanks:

In Session 1 there was a **FUN FACT** that read

“IDEA says that your transition goals must be based on your n_____ taking into account your p_____ and i_____.”

Right.

IDEA says that your transition goals must be based on your needs taking into account your preferences and interests.

See if you agree with this sentence.

“Before I **LEAD** my planning meeting, I should know my preferences and interests.”

Agree? I thought so.

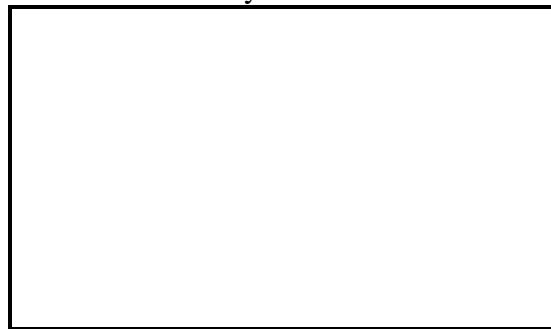
IDEA was written to make sure your transition goals are based on what you want to do when you become an adult. See why it is important to be at these meetings? How is anyone else supposed to know what you want?

Even if you are at the meeting, if you don't know what your interests and preferences are, then you can't be much help, can you? So, you need to think about your interests and preferences.

What? You say you already know all you need to know about your interests? Well, maybe. But, do something for me. Are you wearing a watch? **(DON'T LOOK AT IT!)**. If not, think about the clock in your classroom. **(DON'T LOOK AT THAT EITHER)**.

Now, *(I said, don't look at that watch!)*, very quickly, in the space right below here, draw a picture of that watch or clock.

My Watch



All right. Now you can look at your watch or the clock. Did you get everything exactly right? Did you remember every detail? Even the writing on the watch or clock face?

I didn't when I tried.

Now... you look at your watch a lot...at least 20 times a day, right? Same thing with the clock. I mean, I know you can hardly wait to get out of class! I see you staring at that watch all the time! So, why wasn't your drawing exactly right?

Because when you look at your watch (or the clock) it's not to memorize it to draw, it is to find out the time. Right? Well, the same thing is true about your transition interests and preferences. Until you really think about them, you can't be sure that you can identify them exactly.

So, you are going to spend some time thinking about your interests and preferences.

Your interests and preferences will be different from **other people's** interests and preferences. That's what makes them **your** interests and preferences! That doesn't make your interests or preferences or those of **other people** right or wrong...just different. You bring a unique viewpoint to your planning meeting.

Unique. That means individual. That's why they have **Individual** Education Plans, instead of **Group** Education! Your IEP should be different from every other student's, because it is based on your unique needs, your unique preferences and interests.

So that's the first step, really. Knowing that you bring unique needs, preferences and interests to the meeting.

Of course, the next step would be getting everyone else to know that. That's another reason you have to identify what you need,

what you're interested in and what you prefer.

Let's back up a minute and think about your **uniqueness**. Your **youness**. Your **individual** ness.

Take a minute and answer these questions.

What is your favorite food?



What was the last movie you saw?



Who is your favorite musician?



What do you like best about yourself?

How many cousins do you have?

What would you change about yourself?

What has been your greatest accomplishment so far?

What makes you feel guilty?

What makes you feel angry?

What do your friends say about you?

What is a new skill you have learned in the last 6 months?

If you were 21 today, what would you be doing?

Who taught you to swim?



Who taught you to tell time?



Who taught you to count money?



How old do you feel?

Who is the person you admire the most?

What are you most afraid of?

Would you like to get married someday?



Name six people you would invite to dinner, if you could.



Now, think about it. Would anyone else's answers look exactly the same? Oh sure, some of your friends might have the same favorite musician, and a lot of people like the same food. But you are the only person who will answer exactly the way you did on all the questions.

So...it's time to put the "individual" back in IEP!

First, look at what you "need" to have a successful transition from school to adulthood.

Why? That's easy to answer!

Because, someday in the not too distant future, you are going to be out of school.

Done.

Finished.

Kaput.

When that day arrives, you need to be ready. It gets real **boring** living at home with your parents with **no money** or **nothing to do**. So, you need to be ready to be independent and satisfied with what you're doing.

The next few years of your school program are supposed to get you ready for that day.

Let's think through this a little more. First, figure out that glorious day you won't have to get up and go to school any more.

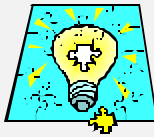


If you are not sure what year you will graduate, go ask your teacher or



coach. Assume that your last day of school is May 31 of that year.

FUN FACT: Did you know that



according to IDEA students who need extra services to do better in school might be eligible (that means qualify) for school services past the age of 18? It changes from state to state and not all students qualify, but you may have the chance to stay in school longer. **Good** news or **bad** news? It depends how you use that time, doesn't it?

Now, on June 1 of the year you graduate, where do you want to live? Be specific.

A house,



an apartment,



In a bus?



In what city? In what part of the city? Do you want to live alone, or with someone else?

Think about it and write down one or more answers:



What do you want to be doing during most days? Working? Where? Doing what? Going to school? Where? Learning to do what?



How do you want to spend your free time?



Now...those are things you want to do.

The question is "what do you have to know or learn to make them happen?" That's what you have to figure out so that on June 1 of that year, you can begin to do these things. Instead of sitting at home. **Bored.**



With *no money*. And nothing to do.

Those are your transition needs. Look back at how you answered the question about where you would like to live. What do you need to make that happen?

Lots of things... right? Things like money.



You have to have money to pay for any place to live. Maybe that's why you have a roommate or live in a smaller apartment. You need some money of your own when you graduate. There are many ways to get money, but the way almost everyone has to get it is to earn it. Work for it.

Which takes you to your second area, what to do with yourself during the day. You probably will need to work. What did you list for working? Do these jobs pay enough money to let you live independently? Are there enough jobs like that in the real world? Do you have the abilities to do the job? What do you have to learn to do the job? How will you learn that?

This is why you need a lot of people to help you make good decisions about your future. I mean...there are a lot of questions to ask here. You can see that figuring out what your transition needs are, so that you can become more independent when you leave school, will need a lot of people who know things about things. You are going to need a lot of transition services...everyone does!

FUN FACT: IDEA says that transition services are activities that help a student move from school to activities of adult life, like college or vocational education, job training and work, living independently and participating in community activities, like movies, sports and shopping.

You're not going to spend a lot of time right now talking about specific transition

needs...you will do that when you get into the goals section of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* For right now, it's enough to know that your transition needs are based on your interests and preferences.

Let's talk a little more about this "interests and preferences" stuff.

Your transition services must be based on your interests and preferences. What does that mean, really?

First...it doesn't mean that everything in the world that you are interested in or you prefer (like) will become a transition need.

I mean, you might prefer Fudge Brownie® ice cream from Baskin & Robbins®.



That doesn't mean that you will want to write a transition goal to learn more about ice cream just to enjoy it!

However, you may have been to the Baskin & Robbins® store so many times, and watched how things work there that you think you might want to one day be a manager at a Baskin & Robbins® store.



Learning what you would need to know to manage a store would be good transition activities.

When it says your transition services need to work on transition needs based on your interests and preferences, it means interests and preferences about what you want to do as an adult.

How do you figure out your interests and preferences?

Good question. You think about them.



First... start with what you do well. What you do the best.



Not necessarily what you like to do the best...but what you really do the best. These are your abilities. These might be school things... like math, science or reading. They might be things you learned at home like gardening, fixing a car or playing a musical instrument. They might be hard to learn and complicated, like working on computers, or easy to do but requiring lots of practice to do well, like shooting a basketball.

List the ten things you do best. Don't worry. This is what **you** do best. That doesn't mean you have to do it better than everyone else. Just because you list tennis doesn't mean you think you play better than Venus Williams!

What are the ten things **you** do *BEST*?



I'll wait while you list these. And, don't give me that stuff about not having ten things. I know you do. Think hard.

10 Abilities

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Once you started working on it, you probably figured out a lot more than just ten. Right?

OK, now look at another list of things. List things you really like to do.



These are things that you do just because you want to, not necessarily because you are good at them.

Oh...you can be good at them. That's no problem. But, don't leave something that you like to do off the list just because you aren't that great at it. These should be things you do 'cause you like them. These are your interests.

I'll give you an example. I like to sing. Especially in the car, with the radio cranked



up loud.



I *really* like to sing. But, other people don't like to listen to me sing. That's because I'm really not very good at it. But, it is still something I like to do. I prefer it. So I would put it on this list, but not on the list of things I'm really good at.

OK, list ten things you really **like** to do.

10 INTERESTS	
1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____
6.	_____
7.	_____
8.	_____
9.	_____
10.	_____

OK, now look at the two lists. Are there some things that are in both lists? If so, maybe you should think about transition services based on those. Remember, transition services help you get ready for all parts of your adult life, not just your job. So some of your transition services might help you to be able to do more fun things as an adult.

Let's talk more about that. Look at my lists when I did them.

10 Abilities of



1. Making conversation
2. Listening
3. Doing math
4. Roller Blading
5. Drawing
6. Writing
7. Working on the computer
8. Being a friend
9. Helping around the house
10. Learning new skills

10 Interests of



1. Drawing cartoons
2. Singing
3. Working on computers
4. Soccer
5. Recycling
6. Old black and white movies
7. Learning about history
8. Cooking
9. Going to concerts
10. Listening to music CD's

One item that is on both my **abilities** list and my **interests** list is drawing.

Drawing cartoons



I really like to do that and people have told me I'm pretty good at it.

Maybe I should have a transition goal to look at jobs drawing cartoons for a living. I mean, I like it and I'm pretty good at it.

What do you think? Yes? No?

But, when I talked with my vocational rehabilitation counselor, I found out that there are only a few jobs as a cartoonist and those people are **really, really** good. I'm good, but probably not that good.

I have some options. I could work **really, really** hard to get good enough to get one of those jobs. I checked with my school advisor about a career in cartooning and found out that if I wanted to get that good, I would probably have to go to a School of



Art when I leave high school. It will take at least four years to learn cartooning and I will have to beat out 100 other pretty good artists just to get into the School of Art.

I'm not sure I can do that. And even if I get in and get out, there are still not that many jobs out there.

Do I give up on this idea? It depends on how badly I want it. It depends on whether I'm willing to work three times harder than everyone else to do good in art classes, and willing to take other jobs I don't really like to pay the bills while I try to find a cartooning job.

You know, I don't really think I want it that badly. But, I don't have to give up on the whole thing.

I could talk to my vocational rehabilitation counselor about other jobs that use drawing skills. Or, I could decide to draw as a hobby. Maybe a transition goal could teach

me how to use the city recreation center to enroll in art classes. I could get to be a better artist, have fun and meet people who like doing the same things I do.

Another item that came up on both of my lists was computer work.



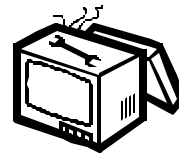
I like working on the computer and I'm pretty good at it. Do I want to look at that as a job skill?

Well, I talked with my vocational rehabilitation counselor and she told me there are lots of jobs working on computers. I can do that right after high school if I learn some basic office skills. Or, I could go to a community college and



learn more computer skills and get a better job.

Or I could go to a vocational training school and learn how to repair computers.



In this case, what I liked and what I was good at matched with what I could probably get a job doing.

On the other hand, I may decide that I just want to keep doing computer as a hobby. Maybe learn how to talk on-line with other people who like computers.



You see how this goes? You look at what you're good at and what you like. Then you explore some. Find out what is out there for working, living and playing as an adult. See how well things match.

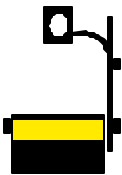
I mean, we can't all be Jennifer Lopez, Cedric the Entertainer, or Garth Brooks. Can we?

That's one of the things that transition planning should do...make you think about what's out there in the real world.

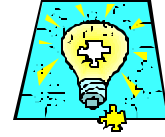
Sure, you can still plan on being a rock musician or movie star. If you are willing to work for little or *no money* at jobs that are *not much fun* so you can earn enough to scrape by and barely pay the rent so you can go to auditions for commercials or play late night gigs at dead end nightclubs. And maybe, just maybe, you'll get that break and then, if you have the talent, you might make a name for yourself.

In the long run, you have got to choose.

Okay I said I'd be quiet. So I am.



Okay. Let's look at what you've covered this session.



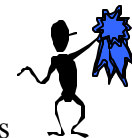
☒ You learned that IDEA says that your goals have to be based on your needs taking into account your p_____ and interests.

☒ You saw that your interests and preferences will be different from other peoples' interests and that you bring an u_____ viewpoint to the IEP planning meeting.



☒ You figured out when you would l_____ school and thought about some things you would like to be doing then.

☒ You learned that t_____ services are activities for you that help you to move from school to the adult world.



☒ You listed your abilities and your i_____.



☒ You began thinking about how these abilities and interests could lead to



transition g_____.



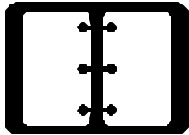
Before the next session
you should:

- ✎ Think about your abilities and interests.
Write down those interests and abilities that were on both lists. Which ones might make good transition goals for where you want to work? How about living? Playing?
- ✎ Talk with someone you listed who you wanted to be on your planning team about these interests and abilities and transition.

Okay. So that's it for now.



Later.



Session 3 Summary Sheet - Your preferences and interests

WHOSE FUTURE GOAL 3: You will identify some of your own transition needs that are based on your preferences and interests.

- ☒ You learned that IDEA says that your transition goals have to be based on your needs based on your preferences and interests.
- ☒ You saw that your interests and preferences will be different from other peoples' interests and learned that you bring a unique viewpoint to the transition planning meeting.
- ☒ You figured out when you would leave school (probably) and thought about some things you would like to be doing then.
- ☒ You learned that transition services are activities for you that help you to move from school to the adult world.
- ☒ You listed your abilities and interests.
- ☒ You began thinking about how these abilities and interests could lead to transition goals.