

## **Partnerships Project Discovery Activities and Transition Planning**

### **1) Getting to know the student.**

**Visit the student at their home and spend time with them.** Ask questions of them and their family and observe the student.

**Routines:** Ask about their typical routines on a school day (before and after school). What about on a weekend day or a vacation day? What support does the family provide? What strengths of the student's do you note? Have some strategies been developed for home that could also be useful in school or later at work?

**Responsibilities at home:** Ask what the student does for chores. Encourage the person who is providing this information to use "rich description" so you can visualize the performance, and any supports provided for chores in your head. Or, ask to watch the person doing some of their chores.

**Interests:** What does the young person do in their down time? With permission, tour the student's bedroom to look for clues about interests and hobbies.

**Community Activities and Connections:** Are there places they like to go in the community? If so, where? With whom? And how often?

**Gather background information:** age of student, where they go to school currently, when they will transition to high school and the expected date of high school graduation.

**Portfolio Information:** Are there pictures the family has that show a new perspective of this student that could be assembled in their portfolio for their IEP? Make a list of other photos that would capture information about who the student is, their strengths, interests, successful strategies used at home.

***Example:** Anders is a middle school student who will turn 16 in May 2006. He lives with his parents and 2 brothers in Missoula. His family moved to Missoula from Portland OR seven years ago. Anders' parents describe him as a morning person and state that in the summer he is up and outside riding his bike at 6:am. When out on his bike he stops and visits with neighbors who are outside and offers to help them with chores or whatever they are working on. He entertains the dogs for one neighbor by playing fetch with them while the neighbor mows their yard. He has helped other neighbors clean their garage by carrying things out of the garage for them and returning the items after sweeping the garage. His next door neighbor has him bring various tools upon request while he is working on his truck. Anders' mom states that his neighbors now give him chores to do 'which they do have a need for' because at times he has tried to help people and done things that actually weren't helpful in the long run. His parents stated that tasks that he likes best seem to involve interaction with people rather than performing a task alone.*

*However, he will work alone if it is a shorter term task such as on trash night when he collects trash from each room in the house and empties it all into a plastic bag.*

*Anders' Dad stated that he loves to pack and unpack. When they go on trips he is the one who helps load and unload the car and ensures that the storage container on the roof of the vehicle is closed. His dad also stated that they don't tell Anders about an upcoming trip until a few days before leaving because he tends to start packing as soon as he hears about it.*

*In addition to being responsible for the waste baskets, Anders also assists with vacuuming. He consistently opens and holds doors for other people (many times this makes him late for school since he has waited for all the students to enter before heading to class himself). At the grocery store he bags groceries for his mom and pushes carts. He frequently volunteers to go on errands with his parents.*

*His brother Luke spends time at home teaching Anders skills like kicking the soccer ball, shooting hoops, throwing and catching the football, driving the lawnmower (with the blades disengaged). His parents state that while these particular skills are good, when an actual game becomes competitive or he is required to fight for the ball or do lots of running, he loses interest and stands back. Anders skis downhill, rides mountain bikes and tubes local rivers with his family.*

*Anders gave us a tour of his home pointing out many details and sharing lots of information with us. He was very animated and chatted pretty ongoing throughout the tour. His mom or dad prompted him to speak more slowly when we didn't understand his speech and they helped translate what he was saying when needed.*

### **Observe the Student at School.**

**Routine:** What is their routine during the day? Are there particular activities or times of day that work better than others? What supports are provided?

**IEP:** What skills and IEP objectives are being worked on? What skills do you see as you observe the student? Any additional areas of need?

**Supports and Accommodations:** What supports are typically provided to the student? Accommodations? Support strategies that seem to be effective?

**Interests/Preferences:** Are there particular strengths or interest that you notice?

**Connections:** Who are the students' friends at school? Are there people who seem to work really well with the student? Gather input from them.

**Example:** *Mary Hall, PLUK representative and I observed Anders in his classroom one afternoon before Christmas. Anders' teacher Mary stated that Anders' is more alert in the morning which is when they do more of the academic work. In the afternoon when we*

*observed he participated in various functional academic classes in a group of 3 students and 1 teacher. Mary stated that they try to make the afternoons more hands on and active to keep his attention. Anders didn't initiate conversation with his peers or teachers while we observed and was much less talkative than during the observation at home.*

*The sessions where there was something active required of Anders' such as finding words on a sheet of paper, or copying information off the board he participated more than the session where the students were expected to listen to the teacher read and then answer questions about content. When the teacher was reading Anders was tying and retying his shoe and pulling his sweatshirt up over his head. When the students were working on their autobiography the teacher wrote the question on the board, such as who do you live with. Anders copied the question from the board into his notebook. The teacher has written another student's answer on the board and mistakenly Anders wrote down that information as well in his book.*

*The middle school students participate in school jobs such as: sorting mail, making copies, shredding. He liked the mail job better when he got to deliver directly to the teachers. (School jobs would be a great activity to observe.)*

*Mary stated that he likes to play games. We observed him working on a puzzle with a teacher and one other student. Although finding the correct pieces took him longer than the other 2 people, he kept working on the puzzle for about 40 minutes until it was complete. At one point the other student needed the portion of the puzzle that Anders' was working on and reached over and took it from him. Anders just picked up some other pieces and started working on a different area. When the puzzle was almost complete and there was only 10 minutes left of class Anders told the teacher he wanted to finish it by himself and he worked until it was complete. Each time he successfully completed a piece of the puzzle he gestured with hand and voiced "yeah". Any time that a teacher told him he did a good job he replied "thank you".*

*When given free time, Mary reported that he sits and reads car and motorcycle magazines. At PE and recess she noted that he didn't like to participate in activities.*

## **2) Ask "What is the Vision for the Student's Life after high school?"**

While you are visiting with the family and student at their home ask them what they envision the young person's life to look like after they graduate from high school. (To do effective Transition Planning we need to know the outcome we are planning to reach.)

**Where will they live?** In a home that they own? In an apartment by themselves? With a friend, roommate or spouse? With someone who provides support to them? In a group home?

**What will they do for work?**

**Do they want to go to participate in post secondary education?**

As a matriculated student? Or access classes, activities, and a college environment without attending college for a degree? Would they like to attend adult education classes or other classes offered in the community?

**What will their day look like?** If working part time, how will they spend the rest of their day? What services and opportunities will they want to access in their community? How will they get to places they want to be? Will the person's community remain the same after graduation? Or are you expecting them to move somewhere else?

***Example:** While visiting with Anders and his parents I asked about what their vision was for his life after high school. His mom said that didn't see him living alone for fear he would be lonely but she hadn't really thought ahead yet to whether he might own his own house or condo, or live with friends, family or a supported living arrangement. As Jenny, Ron, Anders and his brothers start thinking about his life after high school they can start identifying skills that would be important for Anders to learn now so he can reach those goals.*

*As far as work goes, his mom doesn't think she is ready for him to get his first paid job in the community this summer but we kicked around some ideas for summer self-employment options. His parents do see him working in a paid job after high school but don't know what that will look like yet. As he begins high school next year it will be a great time for him to try various jobs and tasks to see what he likes and excels at for tasks.*

*Anders may choose to attend college or access the college environment as a non matriculating student. He can audit classes of his choice, attend sporting events, or choose to work on campus.*

**3) Determine current funding and services.**

**What services does the young person currently receive?**

**SSA:** Do they receive SSI? Or other social security benefits through a retired, disabled or deceased parent?

**Developmental Disabilities Child services:** Do they receive Child Developmental Disabilities Services through CDC, STEP, AWARE?

**Mental Health Services:** Do they receive any Mental Health Supports?

**Other:** Physical disability waiver, TBI waiver

***Example:** Currently Anders does not receive any services other than special education at school, and PLUK supports. He did use Eaglemont recreation services to learn to ski.*

**4) Anticipated supports or services this student will need after high school?**

As you are getting to know the student, think about what kinds of support and services they are likely to need upon high school exit. Think about needs in terms of community living, employment, accessing services in the community, post secondary education, and recreation and leisure.

***Example:***

**At Home:** *When Anders first moves out of his families house he will most likely need some support to live on his own or in a semi-independent situation. He might need help with meal preparation, or maintaining his home, or getting organized for work in the morning.*

**At Work:** *Anders might need someone to find a job for him in the community and might need some job coaching when he starts his job. If he does not have a license when he begins working he could need help learning the bus or bike route from home to work or negotiating transportation to and from work.*

**Accessing services in the Community:** *Anders may need assistance scheduling and attending Doctor's appointments, or grocery shopping for his home.*

**Recreation and Leisure:** *Anders might need some assistance to identify recreation opportunities that he would like to attend or participate in (Griz football games, Missoula Community Theater, a new fitness center, a biking club...) and assistance going to these activities the first few times. Once he is comfortable he might need someone to travel train him to the events or help him negotiate rides with other people.*

**To access Education:** *If Anders wanted to attend the dog handler's class at the local Humane Society he might need some assistance connecting and communicating with the staff to enroll himself in the class. He also might need someone to attend the class with him at first or assistance coordinating transportation to and from class.*

**Other:** *Across all environments he might need some assistance communicating his needs and desired information to other people.*

- 5) **Determine which agencies might provide funding for these services or provide these supports? Consider WIA, DD, VR, SSA, Mental Health, Job service, Job Corps... (Family, friends, and neighbors might provide assistance that augments or replaces agency supports.)**

**WIA:** Workforce programs can provide assistance to locate employment. Each local office seems to work differently. Youth are eligible from age 14 to age 21. *If Anders wanted to have a work experience this year WIA might be able to arrange it for him and pay the cost of his wages. Typically job coaching isn't provided.*

**Developmental Disabilities Program:**

*Anders will turn 16 in May. At age 16 he can apply for adult Developmental Disabilities services through the regional Developmental Disabilities office. Once found eligible he*

*will receive Case Management Services (the only service that is an entitlement in the adult system. The rest of the services are based upon eligibility and availability.) His assigned Case Manager will help Anders and his family plan for what services he will need as an adult, become familiar with what is available near where he wants to live, and place his name on the chosen waiting lists. Typically youth don't move into adult services prior to high school graduation unless there is some crisis.*

*At age 17 ½ Anders can ask his Case Manager to place his name on the waiting list for **Community Supports Services**. This is a Developmental Disabilities service available to people who don't yet have access to more formal day program or residential services. Community Supports Services consist of an annual allotment of \$7,800 that the person uses to meet their priority needs. Job development and coaching, support to access leisure or recreation activities, equipment, and transportation are a few examples of how people use this money.*

*At age 18 Anders can apply for **SSI** (Supplemental Security Income) which will come with **Medicaid** health insurance in Montana. (You might be eligible for SSI earlier than age 18 if you and your family meet income and resource limitations. However at 18, only your income and your resources are counted in the determination process.) **In 2007 the monthly Federal Benefit rate for SSI is \$623.00.***

**Vocational Rehabilitation (VR):** The summer before their last year of high school students can apply for VR funding. VR can fund services such as: job development, job coaching, and assessment, technology that you might need to perform your job, accommodations to make your work place accessible, and they can provide some assistance with education. VR doesn't usually provide services themselves but is more likely to contract with an employment vendor to provide the services for someone.

**Mental Health Services:** might include employment services, case management, counseling, or residential supports.

**Disabled Student Services:** Based on college campuses to assist students with disabilities access services they might need, advocate for necessary accommodations. Disabled Student Services is an excellent resource for teachers and students who have questions about how to best prepare youth for college.

**Job Corps** or other technical training programs might be an option for other students.

- 6) Write up action steps (The activity can be to ask for information, to apply for services or ask for input from that adult agency in the transition preparation).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action to be completed</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>
By May 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2007	complete application for DD services	Parents
January 12, 2007	Begin taking photos for Anders' portfolio	Parents, PLUK, RI
January 12, 2007	Start a list of skills, interests, tasks that Anders' can do to include in his Portfolio	“ “
February 30, 2007	Visit the Montech Assistive Technology Lab To explore technology options that could assist in Communication with unfamiliar people.	TEAM

- 7) Based upon the vision of the student's post school outcomes, what are some skills for them to learn, or strategies to promote them to be more independent and help them achieve these goals?

**At Home:** making lunches, using the microwave, doing laundry, using the phone to coordinate transportation or activities, learning additional chores, taking care of family pets.

**At Work/school:** trying various jobs to determine his interests, skills, preferences. Working on self managing his schedule at school, work performance on school jobs, self managing his schedule of chores at home.

**Accessing services in the Community:** helping make grocery lists, locating items from the list at the grocery store, budgeting for a new DVD, making bank deposits, writing checks...

**Recreation and Leisure:** Volunteering at the Humane Society, participating in a group community bike ride event.

**To access Education:** If a student wants to attend college it is critical to determine what the academic prerequisites are for the school he wants to attend so he can make sure that his high school curriculum will meet entrance requirements. Also he should find out what services are offered to students with disabilities on the campus of his choice and how to access these services. College services for students with disabilities have much different expectations for self direction and self advocacy than typical special education services in high school.

**Communication:** *how do you communicate critical information when someone does not understand what you are saying.*

- 8) Is there any technology that could assist them to be more self-managing and more independent? (This can be a low-tech as an alarm watch or checklist, or devices that help the person have more control in their home).**

*Ander's family is using walkie talkies to enable Anders to tell them where he is when he is off by himself on his bike. A checklist or a memory device might enable someone to self manage school assignments or help prompt themselves about what is next.*

*There are some small, very portable devices that Anders might find useful to help clarify or augment what he is trying to communicate when his audience does not understand him. A visit to the Montech Assistive Technology lab could provide Anders and his team information about potential options.*

- 9) Based on what we have learned in Discovery for this student, what information needs to be captured in their Portfolio to share with high school teachers, people who will assist in planning their transition, and adult agencies? ( think of what pictures would also help communicate who the student is.)**

*Pictures of Anders helping his neighbor with the truck which illustrate his knowledge of various tools and his willingness to help people.*

*Riding his bike, shooting hoops and tossing the football with his brother.*

*Pictures of him performing his household chores.*

*Family vacation photos, including packing the car.*

*Performing school jobs which illustrates his work experiences and provides information about tasks he know how to do.*

*Working on the computer at school.*

*Taking care of his neighbor's dogs (feeding them and playing fetch) which illustrates his interest in dogs, taking initiative to be helpful, that fact that he is responsible- the neighbors pay him to watch their dogs while they are gone.*