

INTEGRITY  
RESPECT  
STUDENT DRIVEN SERVICES  
COMPASSION  
THE RIGHT  
OF ALL  
STUDENTS  
TO BE INCLUDED  
COLLABORATION  
LEADERSHIP

# Planning “Secondary to Post Secondary” Transitions

---

A Guide for Parents and Educators



**Simcoe County**  
District School Board

# **“SECONDARY TO POST SECONDARY”** **TRANSITIONS**

“The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating.  
The paths to it are not found but made, and the activity of making them  
changes both the maker and destination”

- John Schaar



Planning "Secondary to Post-Secondary" Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

The mission of the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB), serving diverse, growing urban and rural communities in the Huronia and Georgian Bay region, is to ensure students reach their full potential to become responsible and contributing members of an ever-changing global society through quality programs which develop the skills of lifelong learning in a safe, caring environment enhanced by community support.

Source: S.C.D.S.B. Mission Statement

## Unity

By Cleo V. Swarat

Original poem found in "Thoughts in Poetry" self-published in 1948

I dreamed I stood in a studio  
And watched two sculptors there,  
The clay they used was a young child's mind  
And they fashioned it with care.

One was a teacher:  
the tools she used were books and music and art;  
One was a parent  
With a guiding hand and gentle loving heart.

And when at last their work was done,  
They were proud of what they had wrought.  
For the things they had worked into the child  
Could never be sold or bought!

And each agreed she would have failed  
if she had worked alone.  
For behind the parent stood the school,  
and behind the teacher stood the home!



Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

## **Introduction**

Graduating secondary school can be a challenging transition for all students, but can be especially challenging for students with special education needs and their parent/guardian(s). The guide was created to provide an overview of the processes and supports available to students and their parent/guardian(s) to enable a collaborative approach to transition planning for students with special education needs.

Transitions can be defined as either being Big “T” or Little “t”. Examples of Big “T” transitions are: into school, elementary to secondary, between schools, out of school into post secondary activities. Examples of Little “t” transitions are: moving from group work to individual work, changing classes, and field trips.

The school teams in Simcoe County District School Board work collaboratively with parent/guardian(s), students, and community agencies to support students’ transitions throughout their school career.

This guide provides information to parent/guardian(s) on:

1. Special Education in SCDSB
2. Roles of transition team members
3. Documents used for planning transitions
4. Secondary to Postsecondary transitions
5. Little “t” transitions – discussion on resources which can support students in making the Little “t” transitions
6. Suggestions on how to become involved in the transition process
7. List of community agencies and resources parent/guardian(s) can turn to for more support

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION in SCDSB**

### SCDSB Special Education Statement of Beliefs

Based on our belief in **respect, leadership, integrity, collaboration, compassion, student driven services and the right of all students to be included**, we advocate that:

- All students have equitable opportunities to learn and participate in inclusive school communities. They are supported in developing and maintaining relationships, and participating in freely chosen activities and groups that result in a sense of belonging.
- Students' unique learning styles are recognized and planned for in a caring and sensitive manner, enabling them to learn and participate with dignity and respect.
- Students' strengths and special education needs are identified and responded to early, as this is paramount to their growth and development. Based on best practices and research the SCDSB will adopt proactive, innovative practices to promote individual student capacities and gifts while addressing their special education needs.
- Education services are delivered using a collaborative and flexible process centered on the strengths and needs of the students, inclusive of family, school, and community, and based on the best learning outcomes for the student. The student's “voice” is key to all decisions made on behalf of and with the student.

The Simcoe County District School Board is committed to providing the most appropriate educational opportunities for all students in an environment that enables all students to reach their goals, some of which are self defined.

Students' unique learning styles are recognized and planned for in a caring and sensitive manner, enabling them to learn and participate with dignity and respect. To accomplish this, a range of programs and services are offered, wherever possible, in neighbourhood schools. First among these is placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services to meet the needs of the student when this is consistent with parental preference.

While the needs of most students can be met in a regular class, some students require specialized placements. Information about specialized placements can be found in the SCDSB Special Education Plan on the public website: [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca).

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

“Transition planning is necessarily a collaborative activity, involving the team of people who will provide support in assisting the student to achieve his or her goals.”

Transition Planning: A Resource Guide, 2002

### **Transition Team**

Transition team members may include:

- Parent/Guardian(s)
- Student, if deemed appropriate
- Principal, or designate
- Classroom Teacher(s)
- Special Education Resource Teacher
- Guidance Counsellor
- Community agencies
- Board support staff

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

- members of SEAC link parent/guardian(s) to information about programs and services related to specific areas of exceptionality.
- information about SCDSB’s SEAC can be found on the board’s public website at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca)

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB):

- supports the transition planning process in all schools
- provides professional development opportunities to staff regarding existing support agencies, employment supports and post-secondary supports
- establishes and maintains connections with local and regional community agencies

The School Principal

- follows regulation 181/98 which designates that the Principal is responsible for ensuring that IEP transition plans are developed and maintained in accordance with the regulation (see page 7 for details)

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

- ensures that the process includes consultation with parent/guardian(s), student, community agencies, and post-secondary institutions as deemed appropriate.

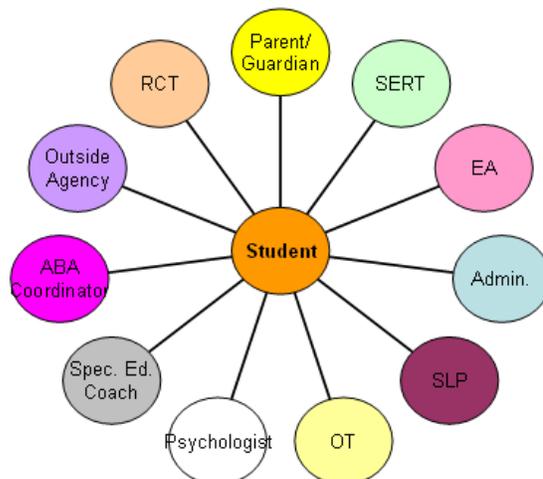
**The School Team**

- works with all people involved with the student to plan a successful transition. While some students may require minimal support, other students with high or complex needs will require family members and other persons in their support network, along with school staff, to play a key role in developing and implementing the transition plan
- may invite interdisciplinary team members (Psychologist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Student Success, Hearing Resource Teacher, Vision Resource Teacher, Special Education Coach, Program Consultant, ASD-SSP Consultants, etc.) to become involved
- maintains open communication with parent/guardian(s) throughout transition and beyond

**The Parent/Guardian(s)**

- attend and participate in team meetings around transitions
- explore with your son/daughter education, career, or community pathways that would be attainable
- explore making applications on behalf of your son/daughter who requires health-care, social services or community agencies supports
- identify outside transition partners who can work with the team
- consider initiating a transition folder (personal profile) outlining strengths, needs and programming considerations
- prepare students for transitions as they present themselves
- maintain communication with school to express cares and concerns

**The ‘Dream Team’ for  
Comprehensive Planning**



Please refer to “Glossary of Terms” on page 19 for an explanation of the acronyms.

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

## **Documentation**

For the SCDSB, 3 documents are used in order to plan for transitions:

1. Individual Education Plan (IEP)
2. Planning a Transition Strengths and Needs Committee (SNC) meeting record
3. IEP Transition Plan

### **The Individual Education Plan (IEP)**

The IEP is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a student, based on a thorough assessment of the student’s strengths and needs. An IEP is developed for every student identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). In addition, an IEP may be developed for a student who has not been formally identified as exceptional but who requires a special education program and/or services. Additional information about IEPs can be found on the SCDSB public website: [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca) or on the Ministry of Education’s website: [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca).

### **Planning a Transition SNC meeting record**

The Planning a Transition SNC meeting record documents the discussion from a transition team meeting. This record is used to plan Big T and Little “t” transitions. The document provides school teams with suggested topics and areas to guide the discussion. As well, it provides a section to outline the plan of action, responsibilities, and next steps. At the end of the meeting, a next meeting date should be set to review the plan and discuss what has been working and what needs to be changed. Parent/guardian(s) are integral members of this process and the information they bring to the table should be documented using this meeting record. This record will be housed in the student’s Ontario Student Record (OSR). Parent/guardian(s) can request a copy of the minutes.

### **IEP Transition Plan**

For students with exceptional learning needs who have an IEP, there is a section entitled “Transition Plan” in the IEP. The Ministry of Education requires the IEP of all exceptional pupils, age 14 or older, to include a transition plan (the exception to this is students who are identified as Gifted). It is specific to the Big “T” transition of graduating secondary school and entering post-secondary activities, whether it is into university, college, world of work or the community. The plan outlines

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

post-secondary goals for the student and serves to coordinate the activities of different individuals and agencies to support the student through the transition process. It specifies realistic goals, outlines the actions to be taken, identifies who is responsible for the actions and indicates the approximate timelines for these actions. The approach to planning is student-centred with attention to the Ontario Curriculum or any specific pathway tailored to the students’ needs and goals. This plan is reviewed at least once per year and updated. Parent/guardian(s) input into the creation of this document is extremely valuable in order to develop a comprehensive plan.

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

## **SECONDARY TO POST SECONDARY ACTIVITIES**

The key to planning the transition from secondary school to post-secondary activities (such as the world of work, further education, or community living) is early and ongoing planning to identify options, regular communication with transition team members and designing an individualized and comprehensive transition plan. However, the maze of post-secondary options can be overwhelming for a student with special education needs and their parent/guardian(s)/guardians.

It is very important to start planning for the future early and including your child in the process, if appropriate. The Ministry of Education requires that “IEP Transition Plans” are created for students with special education needs (excluding gifted) at age 14. This plan outlines the steps for your child to realize their post-secondary goals. For more information, please see section titled “IEP Transition Plans” in this document.

“Begin with the end in mind”

- Stephen Covey

Tips for transition planning:

- Planning ahead helps with smooth transition to the school system.
- It is suggested that you start this process early in your child’s secondary school career to help provide lots of time for planning. It is recommended to begin this discussion during your child’s Grade 10 school year.
- Your school contact, family support worker or a friend may help you through this process and accompany you to meetings.
- The Transition Team composition may need to be supplemented with: SERT, guidance counsellor, community agency personnel, special education department chair, or others as deemed appropriate.

Possible action items to develop a comprehensive post-secondary transition plan:

- Start the transition process to post-secondary activities by answering these questions with your child:
  - What is the story of your child?
  - What is his/her dream for the future? What is your dream for his/her future?

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

- What is his/her nightmare? What is your nightmare?
  - Who is your child?
  - What are his/her strengths, abilities, gifts, and talents?
  - What are his/her needs?
  - What is the plan of action?
  - Who is responsible?
- 
- Once you have a clear understanding of the end, you can plan backwards to determine what courses, supports and skills you child will require in order to achieve the goals for post-secondary life.
  - Attend an “IEP Transition Plan” meeting to be held at the secondary school in which you will have the opportunity to discuss your child’s strengths and needs, future goals, and clarify roles and responsibilities for yourself, school staff and any others involved.
  - The process of developing or reviewing a transition plan should include the following steps:
    - Identifying the student’s transition goals;
    - Identifying the steps and actions necessary for achieving these goals;
    - Coordinating the transition plan with the IEP and other plans;
    - Identifying timelines and responsibilities.
- from: Transition Planning: A Resource Guide, 2002
- A goal that should be considered for every student’s transition plan is one related to the acquisition and enhancement of self-advocacy skills. “Self-advocacy begins with disclosure by the student of his or her need for accommodations. This is a significant issue, especially for students with invisible disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities) when applying for employment or for admission to postsecondary institutions.” (Transition Planning: A Resource Guide, 2002)

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR TRANSITION PLANNING FOR POST-SECONDARY ACTIVITIES:

**Two to Three Years Before Leaving School.** If applicable, continue to:

- Explore community support services and programs, in discussion with Guidance Counsellors and SERTS
- Invite student, services providers and others to the transition meeting.
- Explore options for future living arrangements.

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

- Match career interests and skills with vocational course work and community work experiences.
- Gather more information on post-secondary programs and the support services offered.
- Explore options for financial support.
- Learn and practice communication skills and social skills for different settings (employment, school, recreation, with peers).
- Begin a portfolio and resume and update as needed.
- Practice independent living skills, e.g., budgeting, cooking, using public transportation.
- Begin building job skills.

**One Year Before Leaving School.** If applicable, continue to:

- Apply to post-secondary programs for further education and/or to community support programs in accordance with the student’s post-school goals.
- Work in collaboration with community agencies to investigate post-secondary employment or apprenticeship opportunities.
- Apply for financial support programs, where needed.
- Update transition portfolio. Compile critical records (or copies of these records) which the student can provide to the organization(s) and which will be providing support to him/her after leaving school.

Student questions to consider prior to the transition into the **World of Work**:

- Have I spoken to the Guidance Counsellor at my school?
- Have I created a list of jobs/careers that match my interests and abilities?
- Which of these jobs/careers will provide me with sufficient and stable income for the future?
- Am I qualified for this work? If not, what do I need to do to change that?
- What skills or qualifications would make me more employable in this field?
- Will my disability impact in any way on my ability to do the work?
- What would my employer need to do to accommodate for my disability?
- Is this workplace accessible for me?

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

- Would I feel comfortable speaking to my employer or co-workers about my disability?
- Would I benefit from a mentor or guide in this work place?

Student questions to consider prior to the transition into **College / University**:

- Am I taking the required high school courses that will get me into the program I wish to study at college/university?
- Do I know what is in my IEP and why?
- Have I met with my SERT to discuss my future plans?
- Do I know about my disability and can I advocate for what I need to be successful?
- Do I know the kinds of accommodations that will provide me with an equal opportunity to succeed at college/university?
- Will I need to use assistive technology to aide my ability to be successful in college or university
- Do I have independent study skills?
- Do I know the Colleges and Universities that have Disability Resource Centres (Centre for Access) and programs for students with special education needs?
- Have I contacted the College/University Disability Centre (Centre of Access) to investigate the criteria for access to these centres
- Have I arranged visits to the college/ university that I would like to attend?

Student questions to consider prior to the transition into **Community**:

- Have I contacted outside agencies that can assist in this transition?
- Have I worked with my school team to create a comprehensive transition plan?
- Have I learned to use public transportation?
- What can I do on my own? What do I need help with? Consider: daily living skills, shopping, transportation, time/money management, meal planning, use of phone, and household chores.
- Have I applied for financial aid, if applicable?
- Have I created a portfolio to share with workers that describes what I like and dislike and my strengths and needs?

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

## LITTLE “t” TRANSITIONS

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

- Lao Tse



Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

### **“Little t” Transitions**

Transitions happen before, during and after the school day. They range from the bus ride to school to moving between locations in the school for different classes to transitioning to after school activities. While these transitions may seem small, they can cause some students with special education needs to feel anxious and unsure. All students, but especially students with special education needs, tend to perform best when there is routine and the schedule is predictable.

In order to assist your child cope with these little “t” transitions that occur throughout their day, you can:

- Establish a routine for getting ready for school.
- Practise with your child what he/she needs to do to get ready at the end of the school day (e.g., packing their bag, organizing homework).
- Share with the school team successful strategies you use at home to prepare your child for transitions.
- Attend a “Planning a Transition SNC.” If your child is struggling with little “t” transitions at school, your school team may request your attendance at a “Planning a Transitions SNC.” Your input is invaluable to assist the school team in continuing to provide your child with a program to best meet his/her needs.

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

**Community Resources**

211 – Community Connection  
Alternate: 1-866-743-7818  
TTY: 1-888-435-6086

Candelighters Simcoe  
6 Emily Court  
Barrie, ON  
L4N 6B4  
(705) 737-4296

Catulpa Community Support Services  
165 Ferris Lane  
Barrie, ON  
L4M 2Y1  
(705) 733-3227

Central Community Care Access Centre  
Richmond Hill Office  
1100 Gorham Street Unit 1  
Newmarket, ON  
905 763 9928  
[www.ccac-ont.ca](http://www.ccac-ont.ca)

Children’s Treatment Network  
165 Ferris Lane  
Barrie, ON  
L4M 2Y1  
(705) 719-4795

Community Living Huronia  
339 Olive Street  
Midland, ON  
L4R 2R4  
(705) 526-4253 ex. 170

Deaf Access Simcoe  
340-80 Bradford St.  
Barrie, ON  
L4N 6S7  
(705) 728-3577



Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

E3 Community Services  
250-A Peel Street  
Collingwood, ON  
L9Y 3W2  
(705) 446-0816

Geneva Centre for Autism  
112 Merton Street  
Toronto, ON  
M4S 2Z8  
(416) 322-7877

Integration Action for Inclusion Ontario  
Local Chapter  
Mary Madaleno  
1911 Moonstone Rd. West  
Elmvale, ON  
L0L 1P0  
705-322-1648

Kinark Child and Family Services  
34 Simcoe Street  
Barrie, ON  
L4N 6T4  
(705) 726-8861

Learning Disabilities Association of Simcoe County  
76 Mulcaster Street, Second Floor  
Barrie, ON  
L4M 3M4  
(705) 726-5553 or 1-866-919-5372

Ontario Early Years Centre - Barrie  
72 Ross Street, Unit #11  
Barrie, ON  
L4M 3M4  
(705) 792-7878

Ontario Early Years Centre – Alliston  
13 Wellington Street West  
Alliston, Ontario  
L9R 1J3  
(705) 435-4308



Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

Ontario Early Years Centre - Orillia  
80 Colborne Street  
Orillia, Ontario  
L3V 2Y7  
(705) 325-1299

Ontario Early Years Centre - Collingwood  
250-A Peel Street  
Collingwood, Ontario  
L9Y 3W2  
(705) 446-0816

Ontario Early Years Centre – Midland  
356 King Street  
Midland, Ontario  
L4R 3M8  
(705) 526-9820

Simcoe Community Services  
39 Fraser Court  
Barrie, ON  
L4N 5J5  
(705) 726-9082

Simcoe Muskoka Community Care Access Centre  
15 Sperling Drive  
Barrie, ON  
L4M 6K9  
(705) 721-8010



Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

## **Resources**

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Resource Guide: A reference for school board staff, 2007, Kinark School Support Program and Simcoe County District School Board

Effective Educational Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Resource Guide, 2007, Ministry of Education.

Employment Guide for Students with Disabilities  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/students/disabilities/>

Planning Entry to School: A Resource Guide, 2005, Ministry of Education.

Shared Solutions: A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs, 2007, Ministry of Education.

Steps to School for Children with Special Needs: A pamphlet for parent/guardian(s), 2009, Simcoe County District School Board, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, Simcoe County Early Intervention System

The Individual Education Plan: A Resource Guide, 2004, Ministry of Education.

Transition Planning: A Resource Guide, 2002, Ministry of Education.

Transition Planning: Parent Guide for Students with Special Education Needs, 2009, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board.

Transitions to Postsecondary Education: A Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/students/transitions/>

Planning “Secondary to Post-Secondary” Transitions  
for Students with Special Education Needs:  
A Guide for Parent/Guardian(s) and Educators

**Glossary of Terms**

ABA – Applied Behaviour Analysis  
Admin. - Administration  
AIP – Autism Intervention Program  
ASD – Autism Spectrum Disorder  
CFS – Connections for Students  
COA – Certificate of Accomplishment  
EA – Educational Assistant  
HRT – Hearing Resource Teacher  
IBI – Intensive Behaviour Intervention  
IEP – Individual Education Plan  
K-TEA - Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement  
MCYS – Ministry of Child and Youth Services  
OSR – Ontario Student Record  
OSSC – Ontario Secondary School Certificate  
OSSD – Ontario Secondary School Diploma  
OSSLT – Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test  
RCT – Regular Classroom Teacher  
SEAC – Special Education Advisory Council  
SERT – Special Education Resource Teacher  
SCDSB – Simcoe County District School Board  
SLP – Speech and Language Pathologist  
Spec. Ed. – Special Education  
SNC – Strengths and Needs Committee  
SSP – School Support Program  
VRT – Vision Resource Teacher