



Nebraska Transition Checklist

PRIORITY #1 – Apply for HCBS Waivers (If Not Already Enrolled)

Nebraska has eliminated the DD waiver waitlist — families should apply immediately.

If your child is not currently receiving:

- Katie Beckett
- Family Support Waiver
- Aged and Disabled Waiver (higher health needs)

Apply as soon as possible. Do not wait for adulthood.

Important to know:

Nebraska plans for schools to provide day programming and support until age 21 under IDEA. Because of this, day supports through HCBS Day and Comprehensive Waivers do not begin until age 21, when school services end.

- Early waiver enrollment helps prevent gaps after exit
- Apply through Nebraska DHHS Developmental Disabilities Services

Ages 14–16 – Start Transition Planning Early

Transition planning must begin in the IEP by age 14. Make sure the IEP includes:

Measurable Goals:

- Employment
- Education/training
- Independent living (when appropriate)

Instruction in:

- Self-advocacy
- Communication
- Functional academics
- Daily living skills

If you hear: “We’ll address transition later.”

Ages 16–18 – Build Real-World Skills

Ask the IEP team:

- How is the student being prepared for adult life, not just school routines?
- Is community-based instruction included when appropriate?
- Are job skills, stamina, and independence being taught?

Consider:

- Job exploration or job sampling
- Travel training
- Travel, money, and time management
- Social communication in real settings

Plan for your child to walk at graduation with their peers without receiving a signed diploma unless they have completed all graduation requirements.

Age 18 – Apply for SSI

At age 18, parent income no longer counts for SSI.

- ✓ Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ✓ Use medical and school documentation
- ✓ SSI often provides access to:
 - Medicaid
 - Adult services
 - Housing supports

Tip: Apply as close to the 18th birthday as possible.

Age 18–19 – Legal Decision-Making

Explore legal options before age 19:

- Medical and/or financial power of attorney
- Partial or full guardianship
- Supported decision-making agreements

Choose the least restrictive option. [Access a more detailed comparison document here.](#)

Consult a Nebraska attorney familiar with disability law

Ages 18–21 – Stay in School

Expect the student to remain in school until age 21.

This is a right under IDEA, not a failure.

If you are told your child must accept a diploma before age 21, you should push back.

Graduation with a regular diploma ends IDEA services, and families are not required to accept early graduation if the student still needs transition supports.

18–21 programming should focus on:

- Employment preparation
- Independent living skills
- Community access
- Functional academics
- Self-advocacy

Red flags:

- Supervision without skill-building
 - Identical schedules for all students
 - No community-based instruction
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Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Apply for Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation while the student is still in school.

VR may provide:

- Job development
- Job coaching
- Employment supports

VR should coordinate with IEP goals, not replace school services

Before Exit (Age 20–21)

Confirm adult supports are in place:

- HCBS waiver enrollment is active
 - SSI and Medicaid are confirmed
 - VR services are established
 - Employment or day supports are identified
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Advocacy Reminders

- States plan for schools to provide day supports until age 21
- Waiver-funded day services generally begin after school exit
- Transition services are legally required under IDEA
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) still applies at ages 18–21
- Families should expect progress, not just placement

If something in your child's IEP doesn't sit right, trust your instincts. Ask for clarification. If you have questions about the transition process DSAANE is here to help you review, understand, and prepare for informed conversations.

Contact us at 402-413-0199

This document is for educational purposes only and is not legal advice.