Indiana Diploma Decisions

Information for Hoosier families and their students with disabilities

August 2015
Compiled by the **Southeast Cadre of Transition Leaders** of Indiana, with the support of:

**Center on Community Living and Careers**  
**Indiana Institute on Disability and Community**  
**Indiana University**

Southeast Cadre Members:

- Michele Engle, New Albany-Floyd County School Corporation  
- Kelly Grainger, Greater Clark County School Corporation  
- Mona Huckleberry, Jennings County Community Schools  
- Melissa Jones, Ripley Ohio Dearborn Special Education Services  
- Wendy Ritz, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation  
- Jennifer Robinson, Monroe County Community School Corporation  
- Paula Teague, IN*Source

With thanks to IN*Source and to the Indiana families who provided input.

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**Indiana Diploma Decisions** can be used as a reference and guide for the current school year. Please note, however, that the Indiana Department of Education and General Assembly are reviewing proposed changes to the requirements and structure of both the Core 40 and General diplomas. These changes are expected to take effect beginning with the 2018-2019 school year.

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812-855-6508

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This guide is designed for you, parents of students with disabilities. It provides information about diplomas available in Indiana. Knowing about these options will help you and your child make decisions about the best course of study to a diploma that matches your child’s interests, preferences, strengths, and needs for life after high school.

The path to choosing a diploma actually starts in elementary school. The educational program, curriculum, and services your child receives during the elementary years may affect his/her high school diploma options. Developing good reading and math skills in elementary and middle school, for instance, is essential for future access to higher level learning and success in high school.

In 8th grade, you and your student will begin planning the course of study for high school. You’ll look at course requirements and the types of diplomas available as well as employment and career options and the academic, technical, and vocational preparation your student will need to achieve his/her goals. Your student’s IEP will then specify the type of diploma your student will pursue and the courses he/she will take to earn the diploma.

Beginning in 9th grade, at least once every grading period, your student’s teacher of record (TOR) will review and communicate with you about your student’s progress toward the diploma.

Choosing a diploma is not a decision you will have to make alone. Your school and district staff as well as your school guidance counselor will help you throughout this diploma decision-making process and through the development of the Transition Individualized Education Program (IEP). You will review the diploma choice each year at your child’s Transition IEP meeting. Depending upon the circumstances, it is possible to change to a different type of diploma if you, your child, and your case conference team feel it’s the right thing to do.

Ask the high school guidance counselor and your child’s teacher of record to explain how the various diploma requirements match your child’s strengths, interests, preferences, support needs, and goals.
Diploma Timeline

Elementary School

Focus on curriculum as well as good reading and math skills.

8th Grade

Begin planning for high school, review diploma types and requirements, specify diploma student will pursue (if possible, begin with Core 40 Diploma) in IEP, and discuss accommodations.

9th Grade

Communicate with teacher of record every grading period about progress toward diploma. Student takes Algebra I ECA.**

10th Grade

Continue to monitor progress. Student takes English 10 ECA. Discuss transition plan and goals with case conference committee. Retake Algebra I ECA if necessary.

11th Grade

Continue diploma track or, if necessary, select new course of study (“opt out” of Core 40). Retake any ECAs student hasn’t yet passed.

12th Grade

Continue to monitor progress. Retake any ECAs student hasn’t yet passed. Review transition plan and goals

Graduation with diploma or finish school with Certificate of Completion.*

*Students with IEPs can continue to receive special education services in school and work on their Transition IEP goals until the age of 22.

** End of Course Assessment. For more information, see p.14.
Glossary of Terms

Case Conference  A meeting of a committee consisting of the student, his/her parent, the teacher of record, a school administrator, and other individuals as needed who can help the student select his/her course of study and diploma.

Certificate of Completion  Enables a student to leave high school with fewer academic requirements and allows more time for taking vocational and life skills courses. Students obtaining a certificate, however, do not receive a high school diploma and have fewer post-school options for employment or training and education.

Core 40 Diploma  Indiana’s minimum graduation requirement. To graduate with less than a Core 40 Diploma, students must follow opt-out procedures (usually in the junior year) to choose either a General Diploma or a Certificate of Completion. Graduating with a Core 40 Diploma is a requirement for students attending a 4-year Indiana public college or university.

ECA Waiver  An ECA waiver is a process that allows a student who is performing satisfactorily in his Algebra I and English 10 courses but who may not be able to pass the End-of-Course Assessment for one or both courses, to graduate with a diploma. Students must meet specific requirements to earn an ECA waiver. For more information on ECA waiver requirements, see pages 14-16.

End-of-Course Assessment (ECA)  Indiana high school students are required to take an ECA exam after taking Algebra I (usually in their freshman year) and after taking English 10 (usually in their sophomore year). For more information on ECA requirements, see page 14.

General Diploma  A diploma with fewer academic requirements than a Core 40 Diploma. Students receiving a General Diploma must also pass the ECAs in Algebra I and English 10 or meet requirements for an ECA waiver. A General Diploma may limit options for students wanting to attend Indiana 4-year public colleges; however, they may be able to take classes at Ivy Tech Community College or other 2-year state colleges.

Transition IEP  A special Individualized Education Program that helps students identify and work toward employment, education, and independent living goals for life after high school. The Transition IEP process in Indiana begins at age 14 and takes into account a student’s interests, preferences, strengths, and needs. The case conference committee is responsible for establishing the Transition IEP each year.
As your child enters high school and you begin choosing a course of study, you’ll need to be aware of the differences between middle school and high school. These differences can create additional challenges that you and your child had not anticipated. See the chart below for specific items that may impact your child and his/her diploma decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues to Discuss</th>
<th>Middle vs. High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passing vs. Earning Credits</strong></td>
<td>Middle school students are “passing” to a next grade. High school students are earning credits for graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>End-of-Course Assessment</strong></td>
<td>High school students must pass End-of-Course Assessments (ECAs) in algebra and English to earn a Core 40 or General diploma, or they must meet specific requirements for an ECA waiver. There are multiple opportunities to take the ECA prior to graduation, but if a student does not pass the ECA, he/she must take the test each time the exam is offered in order to qualify for an ECA waiver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance requirements</strong></td>
<td>High school students must have 95% or better attendance to qualify for an ECA waiver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modifications vs. Accommodations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Modifications</strong> are changes in the content, delivery, or instructional level of curriculum or assessments that result in lowering the expectation and standards for a student (IDEA, 2004). Modifications may be limited if your high school student is on a Core 40 Diploma track. <strong>Accommodations</strong> are supports or services that students can use to help them access the general education curriculum. The content the student is expected to learn does not change (Elliott &amp; Thurlow, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher expectations</strong></td>
<td>Many high school courses require more homework and expect students to study for exams without as much guidance or “hand-holding.” Students also have more choices, e.g., optional classes, extra-curricular activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>Reading is offered as a class through the middle school years. Typically, reading is not a subject offered in high school, although course-related reading demands increase.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The course of study your child follows in high school is based on the type of diploma he/she pursues. In Indiana, the diploma choices are:

- Core 40 with Academic Honors Diploma,
- Core 40 with Technical Honors Diploma,
- Core 40 Diploma,
- General Diploma, or
- Certificate of Completion.

As previously mentioned, you and your student should begin the discussion about a diploma in elementary school. At the age of 14 or when your student enters the 9th grade (whichever comes first), the IEP will become a Transition IEP and begin focusing on your child’s goals for adulthood. The Transition IEP identifies ways in which the school and family will work together to support your child to achieve these goals.

Your child must be invited to participate in each Transition IEP conference. The Transition IEP requires that your child’s goals for employment, education/training, and (if needed) independent living skills be assessed and updated at each annual conference.

The members of the case conference committee (which includes you and your child) work together to decide which diploma option is right for your child. The case conference committee also plans the appropriate course of study that will lead to the selected diploma. The course of study may include:

- general education classes,
- career education classes,
- elective classes, or
- a combination of the above.

Your student’s teacher of record is responsible for entering the diploma decision into the Transition IEP, and the teacher will also document any accommodation or modification your student may need to participate fully in his/her education. This information guides your child’s educational program as she/he enters high school.

When you make that diploma decision for the first time, it is important to aim high. In most cases, students should start out on a Core 40 track when they enter 9th grade. Give your child every opportunity to achieve his or her best. (See page 19 for more information on why this is so important.)
The Indiana State Board of Education sets the minimum requirements for each diploma type offered in Indiana.

On the graphic below, you will see the requirements for the three types of Core 40 diplomas: Core 40, Core 40 with Academic Honors, and Core 40 with Technical Honors.

Ask your high school guidance counselor and your child’s teacher of record to explain how these requirements match your child’s strengths, interests, preferences, and support needs.

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### Core 40 Diploma Options

Indiana requires high school students to obtain a Core 40 Diploma. That's because a Core 40 Diploma ensures that students are prepared for college-level courses; it gives them the opportunity to apply to colleges within the state.

There is, however, another diploma option. Students pursuing a General Diploma still need to meet specific academic requirements and pass the End-of-Course Assessments (or obtain an ECA waiver, see pages 14-16), but the complete course of study is not as rigorous.

With a General Diploma, students may be able to attend Indiana’s Ivy Tech Community College or technical/trade schools, or may be accepted at some private schools, but they will not be eligible to attend any of Indiana’s 4-year state schools. For this reason, students choosing a General Diploma must formally “opt-out” of the Core 40 curriculum. To complete the opt-out process, you’ll need to:

■ meet with your student, his/her guidance counselor (or another high school staff person who assists with course selection) to review your student’s progress;
■ review your student’s graduation plan and course of study; and
■ decide whether your student will be better served by the Core 40 or the general curriculum.

For more information on the specific course of study required for a General Diploma, see the Department of Education’s information sheet on the next page.
Indiana General High School Diploma

The completion of Core 40 is an Indiana graduation requirement. Indiana’s Core 40 curriculum provides the academic foundation all students need to succeed in college and the workforce.

To graduate with less than Core 40, the following formal opt-out process must be completed:

- The student, the student’s parent/guardian, and the student’s counselor (or another staff member who assists students in course selection) must meet to discuss the student’s progress.
- The student’s Graduation Plan (including four year course plan) is reviewed.
- The student’s parent/guardian determines whether the student will achieve greater educational benefits by completing the general curriculum or the Core 40 curriculum.
- If the decision is made to opt-out of Core 40, the student is required to complete the course and credit requirements for a general diploma and the career/academic sequence the student will pursue is determined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course and Credit Requirements (Class of 2016 &amp; Beyond)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English/Language Arts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits must include literature, composition and speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 credits: Algebra I or Integrated Mathematics I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 credits: Any math course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General diploma students are required to earn 2 credits in a Math or a Quantitative Reasoning (QR) course during their junior or senior year. QR courses do not count as math credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 credits: Biology I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 credits: Any science course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one credit must be from a Physical Science or Earth and Space Science course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Studies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 credits: U.S. History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 credit: U.S. Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 credit: Any social studies course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Wellness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College and Career Pathway Courses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting electives in a deliberate manner to take full advantage of college and career exploration and preparation opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 credits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flex Credit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flex Credits must come from one of the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional elective courses in a College and Career Pathway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses involving workplace learning such as Cooperative Education or Internship courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school/college dual credit courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional courses in Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, World Languages or Fine Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specifies the minimum number of electives required by the state. High school schedules provide time for many more elective credits during the high school years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40 Total Credits Required

Schools may have additional local graduation credits that apply to all students.
The Transition IEP case conference committee (which includes you and your child) should select a Core 40 or General Diploma if your child is functioning at grade level with instructional accommodations. The case conference committee should monitor your child’s academic and functional performance and progress.

If your child is struggling to earn the needed credits required for graduation, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is my student attending school regularly and trying his/her best to be successful?
- Is he/she receiving appropriate accommodations and assistance in school?
- Is he/she having academic or social problems or failing classes?
- Is he/she needing extensive modifications to learn the curriculum?

If you answered “yes” to all of these questions, the case conference committee may need to consider a Certificate of Completion rather than a diploma course of study.

The Certificate of Completion can give your student educational opportunities in functional academic areas including vocational training, career exploration, work experiences, life skills, and community living skills while he/she continues to receive special education services. A certificate offers additional opportunities for students to learn and practice real-world employment and community survival skills.

There are trade-offs with any diploma decision you make. You and your student should keep in mind that while a Certificate of Completion could give your child more time to participate in work experiences or vocational training, opportunities for postsecondary education could be very limited.

If you answered “no” to the top two questions above, talk to your student and his/her teachers or the school guidance counselor to find out what supports might be helpful to ensure your student can continue on a diploma track. You might also contact Indiana parent training and parent-to-parent information groups such as IN*Source (http://insource.org) or About Special Kids (http://www.aboutspecialkids.org) for additional information on high school accommodations and supports.
The Indiana Department of Education has provided a decision tree for students, families, teachers, and guidance counselors to help them as they make diploma decisions.
Adam was finishing his senior year. He had followed the 4-year plan for graduation and completed the necessary course requirements for the Core 40 diploma. However, he had only passed one of his ECAs. Since he had not passed both assessments, he would have to meet the requirements of the ECA waiver process. Adam worked with his guidance counselor and IEP team to be sure he had the appropriate documentation and had fulfilled the requirements necessary for the evidence-based waiver.*

* Specific requirements are explained on p. 15.
As shown in the preceding example, if your child does not pass the ECAs for both algebra and English/language arts, he/she may still achieve a Core 40 or General diploma by completing the requirements outlined below for the evidence-based waiver.

For each ECA subject area your child did not pass, he/she must:

- Take the ECAs at least one time during each subsequent school year.
- Complete any remediation offered each year by the school to prepare for the ECA retests.
- Maintain a school attendance rate of 95% or better over the course of his/her high school career (excused absences are not counted against your attendance rate).
- Have at least a "C" average, over the course of your child’s high school career, in the courses required for graduation.
- Satisfy any other state and local graduation requirements.
- Get a written recommendation from the teacher(s) in the subject area(s) not passed as well as recommendation from the school principal and provide evidence that the academic standards have been met, whether through other tests or classroom work.
3. Fulfill the requirements of the ECA work-readiness waiver.

For students who do not pass the ECAs, the final option to earn a diploma is to complete the steps for an ECA work-readiness waiver. In the box below, you can read an example of when this waiver may be pursued. (Note that the criteria for a work-readiness waiver has changed, beginning with the class of 2017. You can find the latest information on the ECA work-readiness waiver at http://www.doe.in.gov/assessment/meeting-assessment-requirement-graduationwaiver-process).

To receive a work-readiness waiver, a student must meet all of the following:

- The ECAs for algebra and for English/language arts must be retaken at least one time during each subsequent school year. (If the student has passed one test but not the other, he/she need only retake the test each year for the failed subject.)
- Complete any remediation offered each year by the school to prepare for the ECA retests.
- Maintain a school attendance rate of 95% or better over the course of his/her high school career (excused absences are not counted against the attendance rate).
- Have at least a "C" average, over the course of his/her high school career, in the courses required for graduation.
- Satisfy any other state and local graduation requirements.
- Complete the course and credit requirements for a General Diploma, including the career academic sequence; a workforce-readiness assessment; and (beginning with the class of 2017) at least one industry certification from the state board's approved industry certification list.

John was a senior completing his final semester. He had met the academic requirements for a General Diploma and had good attendance. He had taken the ECAs several times; however, he had not passed either test. He had completed a 2-year vocational training program in welding and obtained a 1-year industry certification. John worked with his guidance counselor and IEP case conference committee to complete the steps for an ECA work-readiness waiver.
The key to making the best diploma choice is to match your student’s strengths and long-term goals with the diploma option. The diploma is useful when it meets the needs of your son or daughter.

The following strategies can be used to help ensure a good match between your child and the diploma option.

- Review all available information regarding your child’s progress, including:
  - School records (for example: classroom tests, standardized tests, teacher observations, progress monitoring, and work samples)
  - Prior IEPs and Transition IEPs
  - Formal assessment data
  - Teacher and/or related staff reports
  - Input from you and your son or daughter, including his or her goals for further education, employment, and adult living

- Create a realistic picture of your child’s abilities, interests, and likely postsecondary goals for employment and education/training.

- Ask questions! Understand how your child is performing at school, both academically and socially.

- How has your child performed in general education classes?
- What do your child’s recent test scores indicate?
- What does your child want to do after high school for employment & education/training?
- Which diploma will help your child reach his/her desired goals?
Strategies

Make sure you and your student actively participate in the diploma decision. Being prepared for a Transition IEP case conference meeting will allow you to provide critical information that educators may not know.

**Before the conference**, discuss with your child what he/she likes and his/her interests. Identify what activities your child prefers outside of school. Talk about your child’s strengths in school. Pinpoint school struggles and challenges.

**During the conference**, be comfortable asking questions and sharing information. Share your views regarding your child’s future goals and encourage your child to share his/her views. Be prepared to discuss:

- What type of career your child wants.
- What advanced education or training will be needed for a career.
- How he/she will spend his/her leisure time and engage in social relationships after high school.
- What type of support your child will need to be successful.

This information will help the case conference committee think about which diploma is needed to achieve your child’s postsecondary goals.

**After the conference**, talk to your child about the conference. Communicate with the teacher if you have questions or concerns. Be prepared to follow-up with your child on any referrals to adult agencies, such as Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services, (VRS) which may be able to assist your child to attain his or her desired post-school outcome. Always ask questions to clarify information you do not understand (Conversation Cues, 2012).
If you are not completely sure which diploma is the right one for your child, review data such as student performance, progression on goals, and present levels of academic and functioning skills.

Sometimes the diploma choice is obvious to the members of the Transition IEP case conference committee. In other situations, the decision may not be so clear. In those cases you and the other members of the case conference committee may also use rating scales, questionnaires, and additional instruments to help committee members review critical factors that affect the diploma decision. These tools are not meant to provide the final answer, but they often help point the way.

Choosing Between Diploma Options

Indiana encourages students to begin 9th grade on the Core 40 track. If a student is struggling, he/she can “opt out” of Core 40 and choose to pursue a General Diploma or certificate. Most students should wait until their junior year of high school before they make the decision to opt out. The decision can be made sooner, however, if necessary and if the case conference committee agrees.

Once a decision has been made, the Transition IEP case conference committee reviews the requirements and creates an individualized graduation plan for your student. This plan can outline what he/she should learn and do in terms of his/her employment and community competencies to earn a diploma or Certificate of Completion.

Why is it important for students to begin 9th grade on a Core 40 track?

Because freshmen who try for a Core 40 Diploma can always switch to another course of study later if necessary. It’s more difficult, however, for a sophomore or junior student who has been pursuing a certificate or General Diploma to then decide he/she wants to earn a higher level diploma. There’s often not enough time to earn the necessary credits.

Adapted and revised with permission from Diploma Decisions for Students with Disabilities, Florida Department of Education.
When discussing the diploma options with your child and the Transition IEP case conference committee, it is important to know the pros and cons of each. Below are some of the most common issues that are discussed regarding the various options. Note that the pros and cons listed are for the state of Indiana. Requirements will vary at community colleges and four-year universities in other states.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diploma Type</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core 40 Diploma</td>
<td>+ Recognized by employers. + Accepted by technical schools, community colleges, and 4-year colleges if high school coursework meets minimum admission requirements. + Accepted by military, if age requirement and Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) scores are met.</td>
<td>☒ More demanding coursework. ☒ More homework. ☒ Not as much time available for vocational training, work experiences, or functional life skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Diploma</td>
<td>+ Accepted by technical schools and community colleges if high school coursework meets minimum admission requirement. Students may take community college placement test and be admitted to remedial or credit courses at a state community college, as appropriate. + May be recognized by employers. + Accepted by the military, if age requirement and ASVAB scores are met.</td>
<td>☒ Not accepted by 4-year colleges or universities. ☒ May not be recognized by some employers. ☒ Participation in General Diploma coursework may limit time or opportunity to participate in some transition activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of Completion</td>
<td>+ Provides exit document that may be useful for entering postsecondary schooling or gaining employment. + Provides another exit option for students not meeting the requirements of a Core 40 or General diploma. + Allows students time to gain hands-on experiences and develop needed skills for life after high school.</td>
<td>☒ Not a high school diploma. ☒ Not accepted by 4-year colleges. ☒ Not accepted by community colleges (may allow provisional enrollment or enrollment in career certificate programs). ☒ Not accepted by the military. ☒ May not be recognized by employers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q: What is a diploma?

A: A diploma signifies that a student has completed his/her high school career by taking and passing required courses, meeting the required academic standards, and meeting graduation requirements. All students pursuing a diploma must meet these requirements. Please visit [http://www.doe.in.gov/ccr/indianas-diploma-requirements](http://www.doe.in.gov/ccr/indianas-diploma-requirements) for specific information.

Q: What is a Certificate of Completion?

A: A student working toward his/her IEP goals is generally eligible to receive a Certificate of Completion. A Certificate of Completion is not an academic credential. There are no state course or grade requirements necessary to earn a Certificate of Completion.

Q: Can a student who has graduated with a General Diploma or Certificate of Completion attend college in Indiana?

A: Indiana’s public 4-year colleges and universities now require that students have at least a Core 40 Diploma. Ivy Tech Community College and some private colleges in the state accept student applicants who have graduated with a General Diploma. These community colleges may have additional requirements such as remedial coursework or additional placement exams. Contact the college admissions office and talk to them about their requirements and entrance criteria. You may also want to talk with the college’s office of disability services.

Q: If a student receives a Certificate of Completion, can he/she return to high school and earn a diploma?

A: Students with IEPs can receive special education services until they turn 22 years of age. Students who receive a Certificate of Completion may later decide to return to high school and earn a diploma, but, depending upon their age, they may not be eligible to participate in special education. Case conference teams would need to consider the number of credits previously earned toward a diploma. For instance, if a 21-year-old student only has 10 credits toward a diploma, it would be extremely difficult for he/she to complete the remaining, required 30 credits in time to earn a General Diploma.
Making an informed choice about a diploma is essential for the long-term success of your child. It’s equally important for your child to be actively involved in this decision as well as in the development of the goals contained in the Transition IEP. Your child’s interests, strengths, preferences, and support needs should be driving the course of study, postsecondary and annual goals, services, and activities. Therefore, self-determination and self-advocacy are important skills for your child to develop as he/she enters middle and high school.

**Self-determination** is knowing about yourself—your interests, preferences, strengths, and your support needs—and believing that you are a capable and effective person (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, and Wehmeyer, 1998).

**Self-advocacy** is making your own decisions, learning and understanding your personal rights, and having the necessary communication and leadership skills to share your interests, strengths, preferences, and needs with others. (Retrieved from www.NSTTAC.org, October 1, 2014).

Helping your child increase his/her self-determination and self-advocacy skills will give him/her a better chance at creating their own educational plan. In addition, these skills may help increase your child’s interest and investment in his/her education.

Transition IEP meetings are an ideal environment to implement and practice these skills. Your child should be communicating, providing information, giving feedback and generating ideas. In the meeting, your child can share his/her hopes and dreams through videos or pictures and can even lead the conference and the discussion! Self-determination and self-advocacy skills will ensure that the Transition IEP supports your student in pursing his/her dreams.
Your child’s self-advocacy skills will be essential for his/her long-term success in college, on the job, and in life. Research has shown that students with self-advocacy skills have better postsecondary outcomes in employment and education (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997).

Below are online resources that may be helpful to you, your child, and teachers.

**Student**

- **Tips for Teens: Use Your IEP Meetings to Learn How to Advocate for Yourself**
- **Be Your Own Best Self Advocate**
- **Ten Steps to Effective Self-Advocacy** *(video)*
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6n3uFdXo2Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6n3uFdXo2Y)

**Parent**

- **A Tool Kit to Assist with Advocacy Skills**
  [https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/advocacy](https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/advocacy)
- **How You Can Help Your Child Learn to be a Good Self-Advocate**

**Teacher**

- **ME! Lessons for Teaching Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy**
  [https://www.ou.edu/content/dam/Education/zarrow/me/ME%20Lessons%20and%20Materials.pdf](https://www.ou.edu/content/dam/Education/zarrow/me/ME%20Lessons%20and%20Materials.pdf)
- **It’s Not Easy**
  [http://www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/transiotion-education-materials/its-not-easy.html](http://www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/transiotion-education-materials/its-not-easy.html)
- **Whose Future Is it Anyway?** *(Evidence-based curriculum)*
  [http://www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/trasition-education-materials/whos-future-is-it-anyway.html](http://www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/trasition-education-materials/whos-future-is-it-anyway.html)
- **Keeping it Real: How to Get the Supports You Need for the Life You Want** *(English & Spanish versions)*
  [http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggcenter/projects/keep_real_more.html](http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggcenter/projects/keep_real_more.html)
Many teachers have found a number of creative online resources to help students share their interests, strengths, preferences, and support needs during case conferences.

Below are just a few examples of free online presentation tools and apps your student may enjoy using.

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<th>Resources for Sharing</th>
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A big reason for carefully making a diploma decision is the impact it can have on your child’s eventual career options. Your child will learn about different careers and job choices during middle and high school. Schools typically offer work study and vocational experiences that enable students to learn about various types of jobs and develop skills necessary to be an effective employee.

Here are some additional activities that may help your child learn more about careers and their educational requirements:

- Career interest inventories
- Job shadowing
- Volunteer opportunities
- Job fairs
- Transition fairs
- Vocational or career counseling
- Service learning opportunities

Different jobs are suited for different people. Your child should think about his/her abilities, strengths, and interests as well as the training and essential skills required of the job to help determine if a job is going to be a good match. This information will help impact and determine what diploma or skill sets are necessary for the life that your child wants.
Additional resources and fact sheets regarding the types of diplomas offered in Indiana may be found on the websites of the Indiana Department of Education and its partners.

Below are links you may find helpful as you research your child’s options.

**Indiana’s Diploma Requirements**
http://www.doe.in.gov/CCR/Indianas-diploma-requirements

**Indiana’s Opt-Out Process for Indiana’s New Graduation Requirements**
Indiana Code 20-32-4-7,8,9,10
http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/curriculum/scopt-outprocess1.pdf

**What Are Your Education Options?**
http://www.in.gov/learnmoreindiana/2435.htm

**Navigating the Course: Finding Your Way Through Indiana’s Special Education Rules**
http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/specialed/navigatingthecourse.pdf
References


Portions of this guide were adapted from *Diploma Decisions for Students with Disabilities*, with permission from the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, ©2005, State of Florida.