



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



NJ Division of
Vocational Rehabilitation
Services

Transition Toolkit: Resources and Informational Websites to Assist New Jersey Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Achieving Positive Postsecondary Outcomes

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Introduction

As with all students, planning for the transition from school to adult life for students with disabilities is a long-term process that should be person centered, have students' strengths, interests and preferences at the forefront, and involve guidance from the entire Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the students and their families. When planning and preparing for a successful adult life, students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing often require a unique set of skills and knowledge, regardless of the mode of communication utilized by the individual. For example, individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing need to acquire and develop a level of competence with self-advocacy skills that others may not require in order to ensure that their communication needs are met.

In an effort to assist IEP teams in meeting the needs of students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), Office of Special Education (OSE) and the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NJDVRS), a division of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOLWD), formed a workgroup to generate a set of skills and competencies for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to develop in preparation for postsecondary education and/or employment. The workgroup included NJ experts in education and employment of individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. This work was in response to an initiative led by the National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes (NDC) Engage for Change | State. The workgroup developed the following resources:

- The New Jersey Checklist of Skills and Competencies for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- A Glossary of key terms
- Resources and Informational Websites to Assist New Jersey Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Achieving Positive Postsecondary Outcomes

This Toolkit was developed to supplement existing resources for students on transition planning, including the information available on the NJDOE [Special Education Learning Opportunities website](#). Furthermore, an excellent resource for Deaf Education from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Incorporated (NASDSE) titled "[Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing-Third Edition](#)" includes the chapter *Postsecondary Transition: From Part B to Education/Training, Employment and Independent Living* that is recommended to be reviewed for background and guidance regarding the unique needs of individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and for additional resources regarding transition planning.

Following the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the New Jersey Checklist of Skills and Competencies is organized into the five Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) activities and two additional categories relevant for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences, internships, and apprenticeships;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living skills;



- Counseling on enrollment opportunities in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring (and self-determination);

Plus two additional categories relevant for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

- Communication support access; and
- Community engagement.

The Skills and Competencies Checklist is designed to be used by the student, families, educators, child study team members, service providers, and when applicable, the community, as a collaborative effort to ensure that the individual who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing acquires the suggested skills in preparation for postsecondary education, employment, and/or independent living.

It is anticipated that this Toolkit will be helpful in a wide range of educational placements, from programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, to students who are served in the general education setting by itinerant teachers and those who do not receive direct support. The checklist can be used to track the student's skill development and be maintained in the student's file to be updated as new skills are acquired.

Additionally, through NJDVRS, the three Regional Career Centers for Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing include services that address transition needs for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing starting at age 14. The career centers would be able to assist students in developing the skills and competencies outlined in the checklists. The IEP team, including families, can refer students to DVRS for Pre-ETS services.



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