

Transition Assessment Process

A Guide for Developing Postsecondary Goals
and Transition Services

Developed by the Center on Transition Innovations at Virginia Commonwealth University
with Virginia's Interdisciplinary State Capacity Building Team

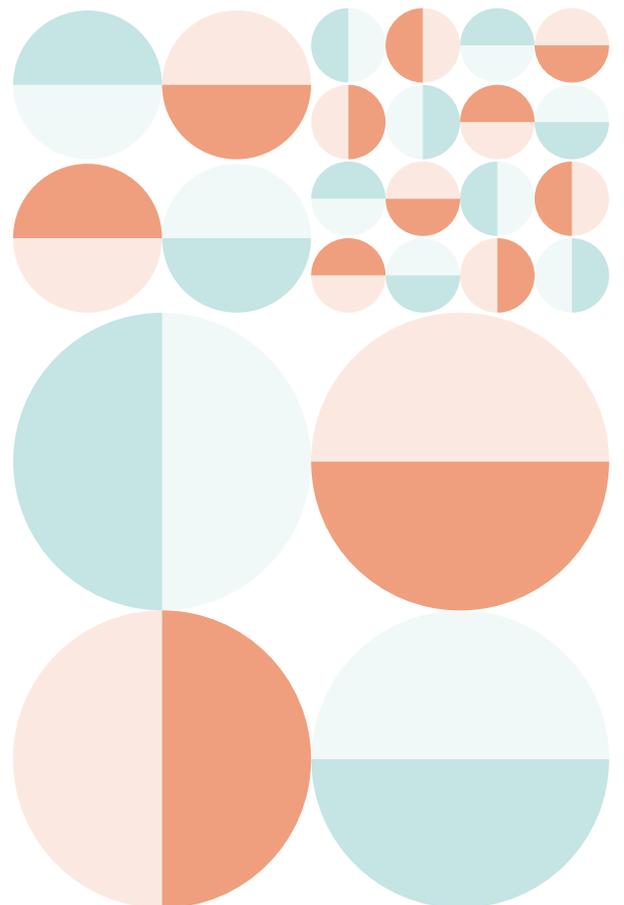


Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	3
Purpose	3
Overview of Transition Assessment	4
Transition Assessment Process	5
Transition Assessment Process Decision Tree	11
Self-Awareness and Career Exposure	
Tier 1	12
Tier 2	13
Tier 3	14
Career Exploration and Preparation	
Tier 1	17
Tier 2	20
Tier 3	23
Final Considerations	26
Glossary of Terms	27

Acknowledgments

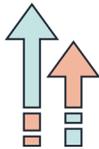
The VCU [Center on Transition Innovations](http://centerontransition.org) (centerontransition.org) would like to thank the Virginia Department of Education for their support and contributions to this guide. Information in this guide was developed in collaboration with Virginia’s Interdisciplinary State Capacity Building team, whose focus is to enhance implementation of evidence-based practices in transition across Virginia. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted.

Purpose

This guide is to be used as a reference to support the development of postsecondary goals in employment and education/training. Use it with the accompanying [Transition Assessment Process Decision Tree](#) (page 11) to:



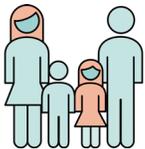
Learn more about the role of age-appropriate transition assessment in the transition planning process.



Develop measurable postsecondary goals that match student strengths, preferences, interests, and needs (SPIN).



Help the IEP team to identify and develop transition services and coordinated activities to support students’ transition needs across school, home, and community.



Engage families in transition planning and encourage collaboration in assessment and postsecondary goal development.

Overview of Transition Assessment

The transition assessment process consists of gathering relevant information to plan, evaluate, and make decisions regarding a student's current and future needs in the successful transition from high school to postsecondary environments. Transition assessment seeks to uncover the instruction and supports that are needed for post-school success. It is the starting point for defining postsecondary goals, annual goals and objectives, and transition services to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The purpose of the transition assessment process is to:

- Assist the student, teacher, and family to identify strengths, preferences, interests, and needs (SPIN), and make informed decisions regarding the student's future
- Assist the student to develop measurable postsecondary goals that capture his or her unique vision for adulthood
- Establish a baseline of information for instruction
- Assist in the development of annual goals
- Provide a basis for course selection
- Assist in selecting transition services
- Assist the student to determine appropriate accommodations and support needs
- Enable students to refine postsecondary goals

Use a Strength-Based Approach

The process of gathering assessment data to plan, evaluate, and make decisions regarding a student's current and future needs is strength-driven. We want to look at what students can do and not dwell on what they cannot do as it relates to employment, education/training, and independent living.

Use a Student-Centered Approach

Student-centered assessment practices actively involve students in planning, communicating, and evaluating their progress toward their postsecondary goals. Student-centered means the student voice is valued and the student is prepared to actively participate and drive decisions in the assessment and transition planning process.

Transition Assessment Process

The transition assessment process should include a variety of methods for assessing the student and potential post-school environments. It is a multi-year process that requires both time and planning to allow for assessment through self-awareness, career awareness, exploration, preparation, and training to confirm interests. Its purpose is to help IEP teams craft postsecondary goals that align with a student's SPIN as well as plan, instruct, and evaluate to determine if progress has been made toward achieving the transition activities and IEP goals and objectives. Additionally, this process can assist with the identification of resources and supports that are needed to achieve successful postsecondary outcomes.

The following Transition Assessment Process Decision Tree will guide you through the five steps of the transition assessment process. This is an annual process that will take multiple years to move the student towards narrowing down his or her career interests to align with their strengths, preferences, and interests. Through the development of annual transition services and activities, students will move closer to reaching their post-school goals.

The five steps in the transition assessment process are:

1. Gather Existing Data
2. Identify Assessment Needs and Assess
3. Analyze Data
4. Determine and Coordinate Transition Services
5. Instruct and Evaluate

Step 1: Gather Existing Data

Prior to using the Transition Assessment Process Decision Tree and determining the types of assessment tools to administer and identifying transition services, you should gather existing data on the student. Collect data on the student's SPIN as they relate to academic and functional performance, careers, and the demands of work. Conduct record reviews, examine observation data, and review previous assessment results from a variety of sources.

Obtain Data from Multiple Environments and Collaborators

Plan ahead to involve multiple collaborators in the process of information gathering. Develop a general timeline and assessment plan to ensure effective collaboration and communication. Examples of information to gather from collaborators can include, but are not limited to the following.

Student

The student is the most critical participant in the transition assessment process. A person-centered transition assessment begins with gathering information from the student. The information gathered can include:

- Passions, interests, and hobbies
- Academic and functional SPIN
- Career interests
- Work experiences
- Self-advocacy and self-determination skills

Family

The family's role in the transition assessment process is as essential as the student's. Their role is to share information on student's strengths and interests in the home and community. The information gathered can include:

- Passions, interests, and hobbies
- Hopes and dreams for their child
- Work responsibilities
- Level of independence
- Academic and functional SPIN
- Workplace readiness skills and 5Cs
- Self-help skills
- Social skills
- Communication skills
- Financial literacy skills
- Effective strategies
- Service agency support and services
- Community involvement
- Physical and emotional health
- Transportation and mobility skills
- Values, beliefs, and preferences towards employment/education/training
- Work experiences
- Self-advocacy and self-determination skills

Educators and Paraprofessionals

The role of educators and paraprofessionals in the transition assessment process is to share information about the student's SPIN both in the academic setting as well as information from any work-based learning opportunities. The information gathered can include:

- Academic and functional SPIN
- Adaptive behaviors
- Social skills
- Effective strategies
- Communication skills
- Study skills
- Progress towards IEP goals and objectives
- Accommodations in school and community
- Self-advocacy and self-determination skills in school and community
- Workplace readiness skills and 5Cs in school and community
- Work-based experiences
- Worksite task analyses and evaluations
- Community involvement

School Counselor

School counselors assist students in developing Academic and Career Plans and are the experts on graduation and entrance requirements for further education. The information gathered can include:

- Academic and functional SPIN
- Aptitude tests
- Academic transcripts
- Progress towards reaching diploma
- Academic and Career Portfolios and Plans
- Assessment data
- Self-advocacy and self-determination skills

Related Service Providers

(Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapists, Behavioral Specialists, Job Coaches, Nurses, Social Workers, etc.)

Related service providers work with students in the school setting but not always in the classroom. Often, they can provide a unique perspective on a student's SPIN. The information gathered can include:

- Functional strengths, preferences, interests, and support needs
- Direct observation of student's performance
- Effective strategies for work-related and independent living tasks
- Progress towards reaching goals
- Skill assessment
- Self-advocacy and self-determination skills
- Academic and functional SPIN
- Career interests
- Technical skills
- CTE competencies/workplace readiness skills
- Accommodations
- Communication skills

Service Agency Providers

(DARS, DD Waiver Case Manager, Respite Provider, etc.)

Service agency providers may contribute information about a student's SPIN from their work with students in the home, school, and community. The information gathered can include:

- Support and services provided
- Level of independence
- Effective strategies
- Interest inventories
- SPIN
- Vocational evaluations
- Situational assessments
- Observation/field notes
- Self-advocacy and self-determination skills
- Community involvement

Employer

For students that are employed, the employer can provide information throughout the transition assessment process to build upon student strengths and identify areas in which a student may need support. The information gathered can include:

- Strengths in work tasks and behaviors
- Support needs on the job
- Job performance evaluations
- Attendance records
- Communication skills
- Social skills
- Safety skills
- Self-advocacy and self-determination skills

Step 2: Identify Assessment Needs and Assess

Once you have gathered and analyzed the most current data on the student from a variety of sources, begin using the Transition Assessment Process Decision Tree. Identify assessment methods and tools that will further assist the student in answering the following questions:

1. Where is the student presently?
2. Where is the student going beyond high school (employment, further education/training, living arrangements)?
3. How does the student get there?

Choose assessments that will yield information about a student's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests related to employment and future education and training. Use a combination of formal and informal tools that align with the student's age, cognitive ability, culture, and language. Collect this information throughout the year, well before the IEP meeting.

Step 3: Analyze Data

With the student and the IEP team, review and analyze the data collected from multiple environments and collaborators and information gathered through additional assessments. This information will assist the student to:

- learn more about themselves
- become their own advocate
- develop postsecondary goals that align with their strengths and interests

Assist the student in developing a vision for what life after high school will look like for the student. The team will have a better idea of what skills, activities, and experiences will need to take place annually in order to make instructional decisions and to evaluate where each student is on his or her journey to reach their intended post-school outcomes.

Document the assessment information in the Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP). This data will assist the student and IEP team in developing measurable postsecondary employment and education/training goals that align with the student's strengths and interests.

Develop Measurable Postsecondary Goals

IDEA (2004) requires IEP teams to develop appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals based upon transition assessment data and knowledge of postsecondary options. If transition planning is to be effective, IEP discussions must center on the long-term goals for working, learning, and (where appropriate) independent living skills. These goals must be based on student strengths, preferences, and interests as they prepare for adult life.

Initially, it is appropriate to develop broad postsecondary goals of the student's vision for employment, education/training, and independent living (if appropriate). As students progress through high school, knowledge of themselves and their career and education/training options increase through exploration and research activities. During this time, students can begin narrowing down interests regarding specific postsecondary employment and education/training prior to graduation. Postsecondary goals need to be reviewed and, as appropriate, revised annually if the student's interests change.

Postsecondary Employment Goal

The postsecondary employment goal, also referred to as the career goal, is the cornerstone of an effective transition plan. It serves as the foundation upon which postsecondary education/training goals and independent living goals are developed. When thoughtfully developed, the career goal anchors the transition plan and steers the direction of future education/training and decisions regarding independent living skills.

Postsecondary Education or Training Goal

While the postsecondary employment goal anchors the transition plan, the path to reach that goal is set through the postsecondary education or training goal. Every career has education and/or training requirements, and it is important for students to understand the training or education they will need to have in order to reach their career goal and personal interests. Postsecondary education and training goals are written to ensure that the student's course of study and coordinated activities throughout high school are designed so the student will be prepared for the education and/or training required by their future career.

Step 4: Determine and Coordinate Transition Services

Once students have identified postsecondary goals, the IEP team will identify services and supports the student will need in order to meet the postsecondary goals. The services must be based on the student's needs, preferences, and interests and include needed activities in the following areas:

1. Instruction
2. Related services
3. Community experiences
4. Development of employment and post-school adult living objectives
5. Acquisition of daily living skills
6. Functional vocational evaluation

Coordinate Activities

Coordinated transition services and activities should support students' development of knowledge, skills, and progress toward their postsecondary goals. Each of the activities must complement each other. The responsibility for developing and completing the activities is shared. Schools, students, families, service agency providers cannot conduct these activities individually. The activities need to be planned and shared among all collaborators.

Step 5: Instruct and Evaluate

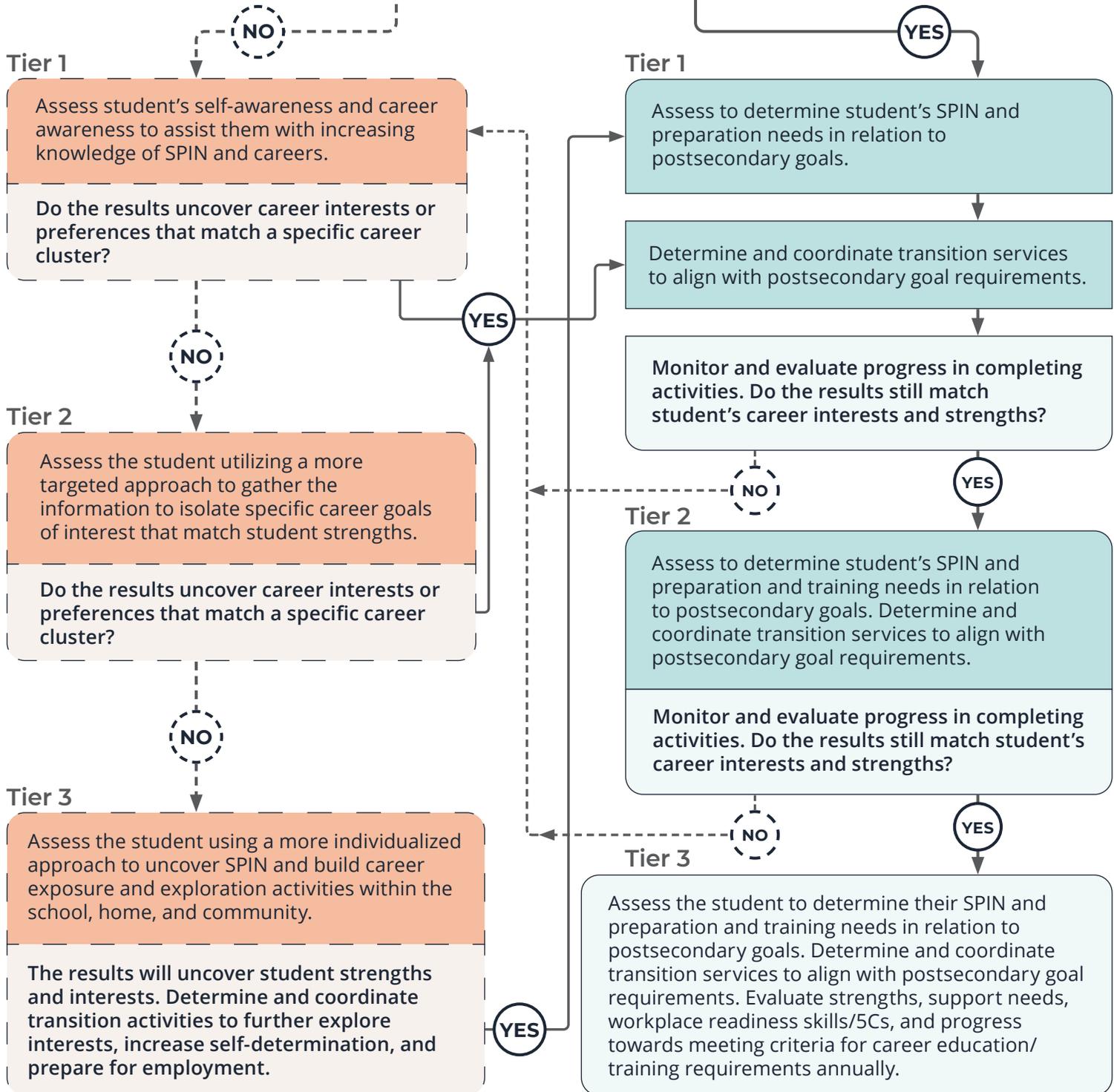
Provide instruction and the opportunity for students to complete the coordinated activities to learn and practice the skills they will need to reach post-school goals. While the transition plan is required to be reviewed annually, progress towards postsecondary goals and implementation of transition activities should be evaluated more frequently. It is natural for a student's transition plan to evolve over time. Evaluating progress of transition activities helps the student and their team stay focused on goals that match the student's strengths and interests.

Gather and analyze existing data from multiple sources, collaborators and environments regarding the student's **strengths, preferences, interests, and support needs (SPIN)** as it relates to employment.

Key:

- Self-Awareness and Exposure
- Exploration and Preparation

Does the student have a specific career cluster interest, pathway, or career goal that matches his or her SPIN?



Does the student have a specific career cluster interest, pathway, or career goal that matches his or her SPIN?

NO

A “No” response indicates the need to assess student’s self-awareness and career awareness to assist them with increasing knowledge of SPIN and careers. Advance to Self-Awareness and Career Exposure: Tier 1.

YES

A “Yes” response indicates the need to assess to determine student’s SPIN and preparation needs in relation to postsecondary goals. Determine and coordinate transition services to align with postsecondary goal requirements. Advance to [Career Exploration and Preparation: Tier One](#) (page 17).

Self-Awareness and Career Exposure: Tier 1

Identify Assessment Needs and Assess

Transition assessment tools included in this tier are ones that every middle and high school student should be exposed to in order to assist them in identifying career interests and SPIN.

To determine the student’s assessment needs, ask the questions:

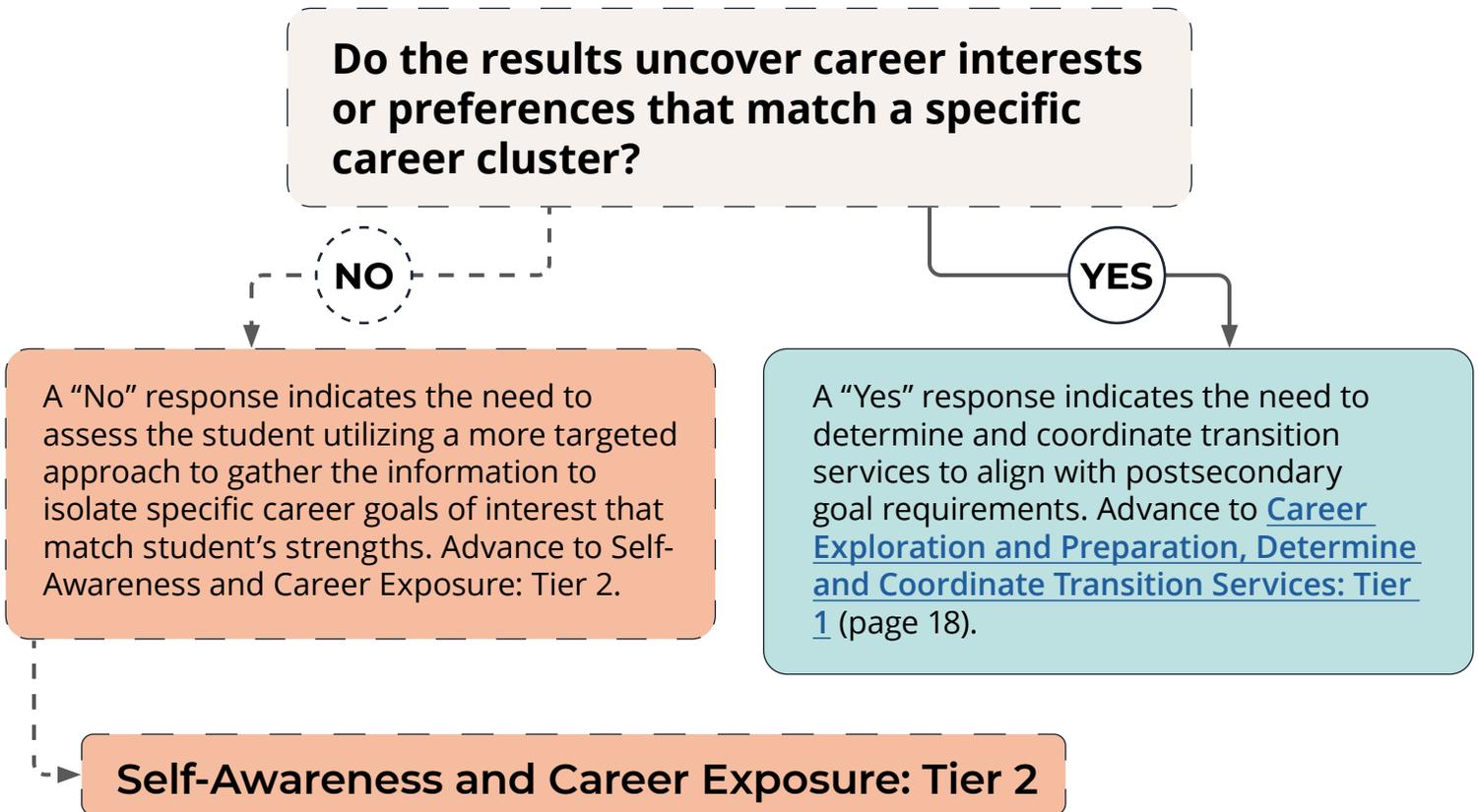
1. What information is needed to further explore, prepare, and identify SPIN as it relates to careers?
2. What informal or formal assessment measures do you need to administer to gather the necessary data?

These assessments can include but are not limited to:

- Student **and** parent interview
- Career cluster survey
- Interest inventory
- Workplace readiness and 5Cs skill assessment
- O*Net Interest Profiler
- Adaptive behavior assessment
- Self-advocacy and self-determination assessment
- Personality and work values inventory
- Assistive technology assessment
- Community-based performance data

Analyze Data

Once the student completes the assessments, analyze the data to identify the student’s SPIN and vision for life after high school. Summarize the data gathered with the student. Then answer the next question in the decision tree below.



Identify Assessment Needs and Assess

Some students may need a more targeted approach to uncovering and identifying career preferences and interests. Issues such as reading comprehension, lack of experience, and ineffective decision-making skills can hinder students from completing assessment tools like career clusters or interest inventories.

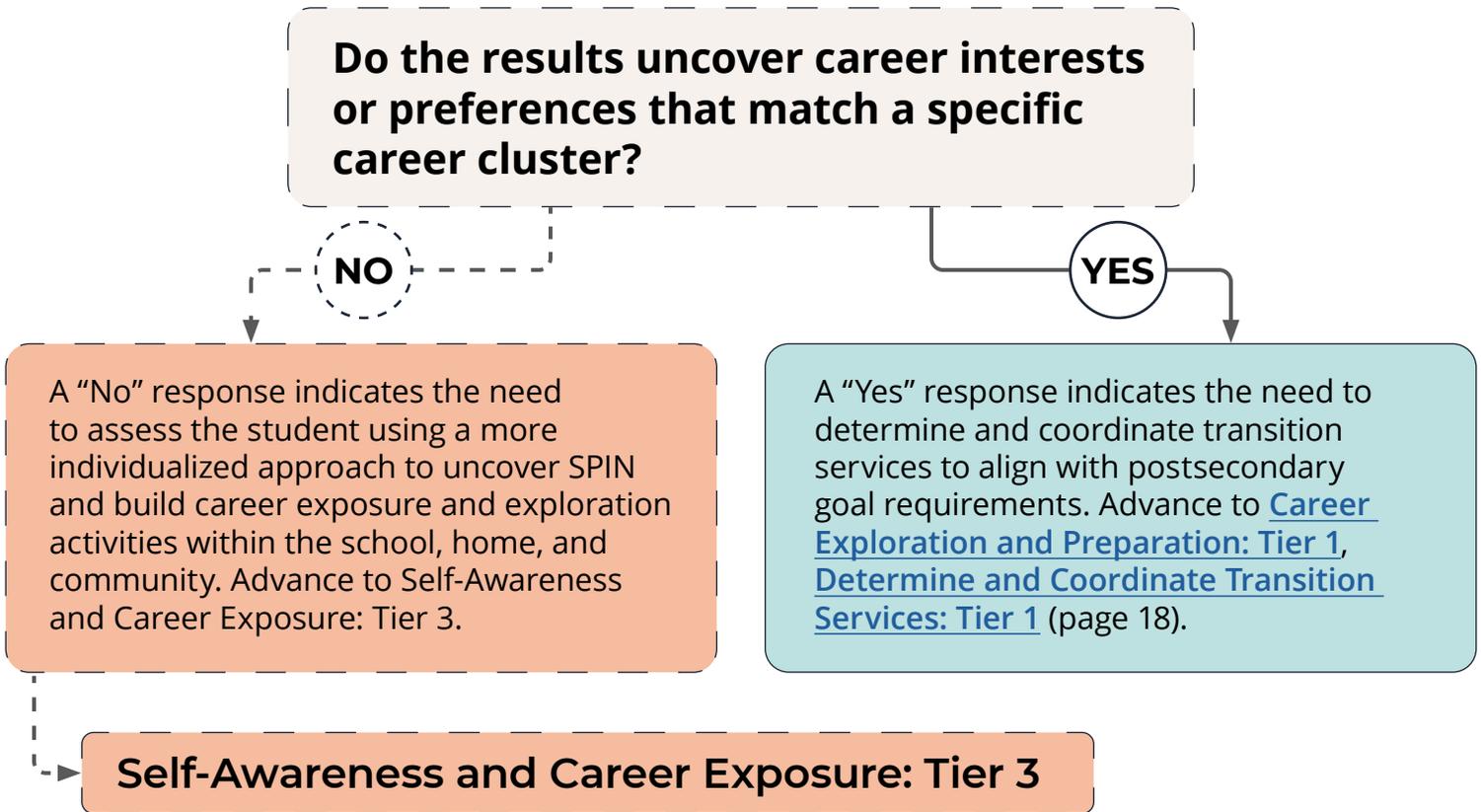
Assessment in this tier should include a functional vocational evaluation. This type of assessment will help students to further investigate career interests and to recognize their strengths and preferences in actual school, community, or simulated work settings.

Functional vocational evaluation can include, but are not limited to:

- Situational vocational assessment
- Orientation and mobility assessment in a work environment
- Job sampling in the community
- Work experience
- Vocational evaluation
- Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) evaluation
- Adaptive behavior assessment
- Workplace readiness skills and 5Cs assessment

Analyze Data

Once the student completes the assessments, analyze the data to identify the student's SPIN and vision for life after high school. Summarize the data gathered with the student. Then answer the next question in the decision tree below.



Identify Assessment Needs and Assess

Transition assessment in this tier are for students who have been unable to uncover and identify career interests or preferences that match a specific career cluster. These students may need a more individualized process, such as a person centered planning approach.

Person-Centered Planning

An effective approach to gathering accurate information on a student’s abilities across various environments is person-centered planning. Person-centered planning involves having the student’s team come together to uncover strengths, identify preferences, and build opportunities and activities to increase independence and career interests in order to map out their future. This strategy utilizes already existing information instead of information developed through typical assessments.

Discovering Me!

Across Virginia, teachers are beginning to utilize a youth-focused, person-centered transition assessment and planning process called [Discovering ME!](#) (CenterOnTransition.org/DiscoveringME.html). This process is designed to build work-based learning experiences for individuals with significant barriers to employment who do not typically benefit from traditional assessment and planning processes and have the most significant barriers to employment.

Discovering ME! teams focus on the student's strengths and interests in a way that is both positive and empowering. The model consists of three meetings focused on collecting student information and building career exploration opportunities in the home, school, and community.

If a person-centered assessment approach is not conducted, additional transition assessments may include:

- Student **and** parent interview
- Adaptive behavior assessment
- Supports Intensity Scale
- Task analysis of work routine and tasks
- Assistive technology assessment
- Orientation and mobility assessment in a work environment
- Employee performance report
- Workplace readiness and 5Cs skills assessment
- Self-advocacy and self-determination assessment

Analyze Data

Once the student completes the assessments, analyze the data to identify the student's SPIN and vision for life after high school. Summarize the data gathered with the student and include this information in the student's PLAAFP section of their IEP. With the student and IEP team, develop postsecondary employment and education/training goals that align with the student's strengths and interests.

Determine and Coordinate Transition Services

Identify transition services to further explore their career interest, increase self-determination skills, and prepare for the work environment.

To determine the student's transition services needs, ask the questions:

1. What experiences, supports, and instruction will assist the student in achieving their postsecondary goals?
2. Who will be responsible for conducting, monitoring, and evaluating impact (student, school, family, outside agencies)?

Examples of Transition Services

- Meet with school counselor to review Academic and Career Portfolio and Plan
- Complete career interests and values activities such as those found on VA Wizard
- Build opportunities in the home to narrow down the student's career interest and build upon strengths
- Participate in career exploration lessons such as Virtual Job Shadow
- Participate in service learning projects
- Participate in school-based enterprises
- Complete work samples in interest areas
- Participate in worksite tours
- Conduct informational interviews in career interest areas
- Explore job shadowing opportunities to confirm interests
- Explore youth volunteer opportunities
- Explore summer youth programs
- Complete travel training
- Explore travel options in community
- Build resume
- Complete a referral to DARS for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
- Complete a referral to your local Community Services Board (CSB)
- Build upon workplace readiness skills and 5Cs
- Investigate Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings to identify courses in career area of interest
- Practice and demonstrate self-advocacy skills
- Learn about disability and accommodation needs
- Actively participate and co-lead/lead IEP meeting
- Obtain a state identification card or driver's license
- Research community supports and services
- Schedule a visit with the local Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) office to determine eligibility for services
- Contact the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) to discuss services
- Develop a career portfolio

Once the services, activities, and person responsible for conducting these services have been identified, document this information in the required section in the student's IEP.

Instruct and Evaluate

While the IEP is required to be reviewed annually, progress towards postsecondary goals and implementation of transition activities should be evaluated more frequently. It is natural for a student's transition plan to evolve over time, and evaluating progress of transition activities helps the student and their team stay focused on goals that match the student's strengths and interests. Advance to Career Exploration and Preparation: Tier 1 (page 17).

Does the student have a specific career cluster interest, pathway, or career goal that matches his or her SPIN?

YES

A "Yes" response indicates the need to assess to determine student's SPIN and preparation needs in relation to postsecondary goals. Determine and coordinate transition services to align with postsecondary goal requirements. Advance to Career Exploration and Preparation: Tier 1.

Career Exploration and Preparation: Tier 1

Identify Assessment Needs and Assess

Transition assessment tools included in this tier are related to continued job exploration, career readiness and preparation, and self-determination.

To determine the student's assessment needs, ask the questions:

1. What information is needed to further explore careers and identify SPIN as it relates to employment?
2. What informal or formal assessment measures do you need to administer to gather student skill levels in preparation for employment and postsecondary environments?

Types of assessment can include but are not limited to:

- Student **and** parent interview
- Workplace readiness and 5Cs skill assessment
- Vocational assessment
- Situational work assessments
- Environmental assessments
- O*Net Interest Profiler
- Physical and functional capacities
- Emotional well-being assessments
- Academic assessments
- Self-advocacy and self-determination assessment
- Assistive technology assessment
- Driving assessment
- Orientation and mobility assessment in a work environment

Analyze Data

Once the student completes the assessments, analyze the data to identify the student's SPIN and vision for life after high school. Summarize the data gathered with the student and include this information in the student's PLAAFP section of their IEP. With the student and IEP team, develop postsecondary employment and education/training goals that align with the student's strengths and interests.

Determine and Coordinate Transition Services

Determine and coordinate transition activities to further explore their career interest, increase self-determination skills, and prepare for the work environment, and education and training requirements.

To determine the student's transition services needs, ask the questions:

1. What experiences, supports, and instruction will assist the student in achieving their postsecondary goals?
2. Who will be responsible for conducting, monitoring, and evaluating impact (student, school, family, outside agencies)?

Tier 1: Examples of Transition Services

- Identify top three career pathways within career cluster of interest
- Research careers further within career cluster/pathway of interest
- Investigate Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings to identify courses in career area of interest
- Actively co-lead/lead IEP meeting
- Build resume and cover letter (can include visual resume)
- Practice interviewing skills
- Obtain a part-time job
- Volunteer in career field or work environment of interest
- Conduct an informational interview in the career cluster/pathway of interest area
- Seek out career mentor
- Seek out workforce training programs and requirements
- Participate in a workplace or an industry tour
- Participate in paid/unpaid internship in career field or environment
- Explore military careers
- Explore the differences between high school and college
- Explore or visit postsecondary colleges, universities, or training programs
- Attend a college or university event at your school

Tier 1: Examples of Transition Services (continued)

- Request PSAT/SAT accommodations (if necessary)
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Form
- Prepare for your community college's placement test
- Take driver's education or behind the wheel training
- Take community college placement tests
- Review rights and responsibilities of individuals with disabilities
- Review assistive technology supports for school and work
- Discuss disability documentation needed for college
- Explore accessibility tools with apps, programs, and devices to support academic skills and organization
- Develop a resume

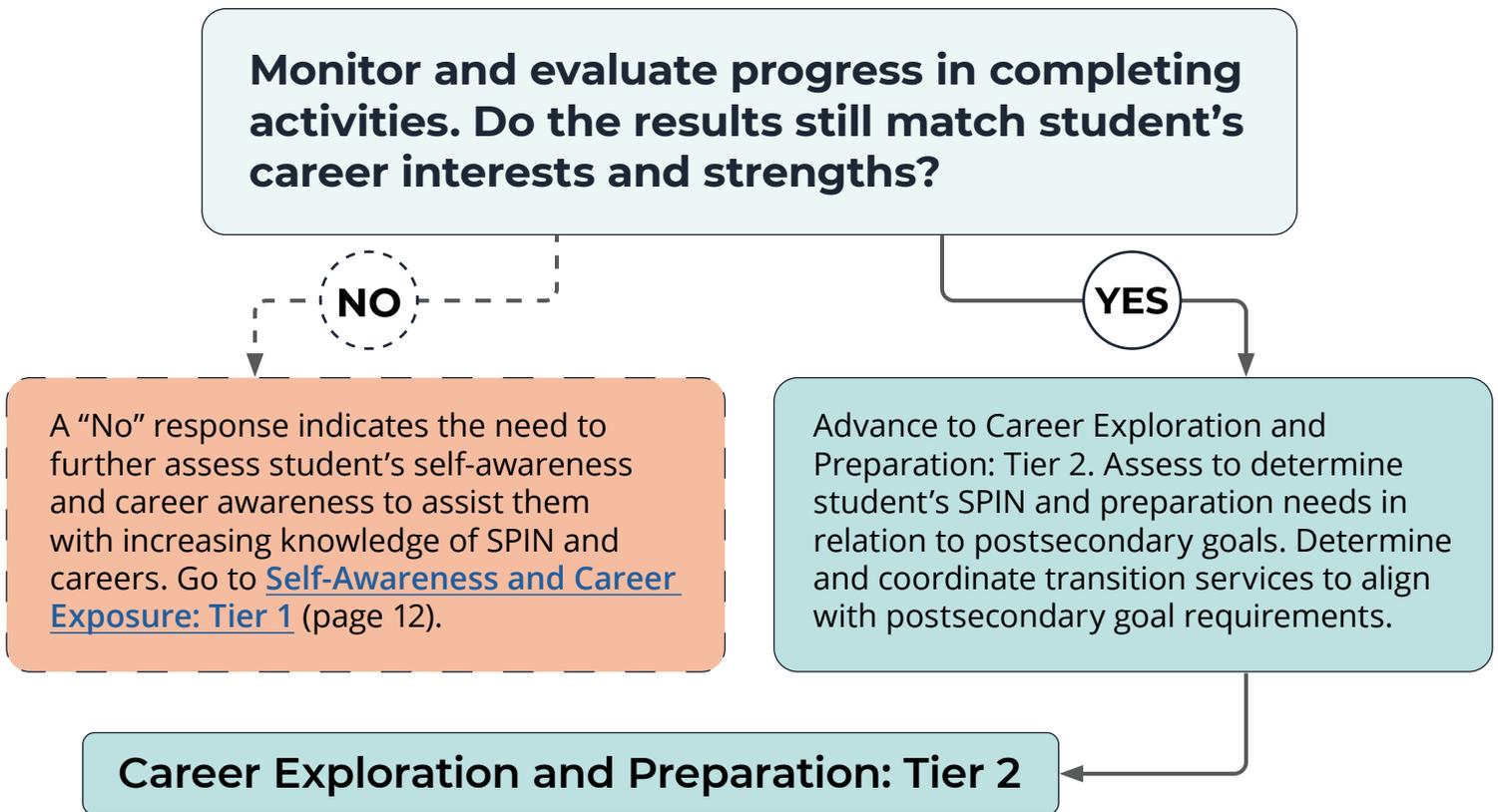
Consider implementing or revisiting the following transition services:

- Build upon workplace readiness skills and 5Cs
- Learn about disability and accommodations needs
- Review Academic and Career Plan
- Develop a career portfolio
- Participate in service learning projects
- Explore summer youth programs
- Build opportunities in the home to increase independence
- Obtain a state identification card or driver's license
- Schedule a visit with the local DARS office to determine eligibility for services
- Participate in a job shadowing experience
- Complete a referral to DARS for Pre-ETS
- Complete a referral to your local CSB
- Contact the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) to discuss employment services
- Explore travel options in the community
- Research community supports and services

Once the services, activities, and person responsible for conducting these services have been identified, document this information in the required section in the student's IEP.

Instruct and Evaluate

While the IEP is required to be reviewed annually, progress towards postsecondary goals and implementation of transition activities should be evaluated more frequently. It is natural for a student's transition plan to evolve over time, and evaluating progress of transition activities helps the student and their team stay focused on goals that match the student's strengths and interests. Then answer the next question in the decision tree below.



Identify Assessment Needs and Assess

Transition assessment tools included in this tier are related to continued job exploration and research, career readiness and preparation, and self-determination.

To determine the student's assessment needs, ask the questions:

1. What information is needed to further research career interests and training and preparation requirements related to employment and further education/training?
2. What informal or formal assessment measures do you need to administer to gather student skill levels in preparation for employment and postsecondary environments?

Types of assessment can include but are not limited to:

- Student **and** parent interview
- Adaptive behavior assessment
- Employee evaluations
- Workplace readiness and 5Cs skill assessment
- Self-advocacy and self-determination assessment
- PSAT/SAT/ACT
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)
- CTE performance evaluations and industry certification
- Assistive technology assessment
- Driving assessment
- Orientation and mobility assessment in a work environment

Analyze Data

Once the student completes the assessments, analyze the data to identify the student's SPIN and vision for life after high school. Summarize the data gathered with the student and include this information in the student's PLAAFP section of their IEP. With the student and IEP team, develop postsecondary employment and education/training goals that align with the student's strengths and interests.

Determine and Coordinate Transition Services

Transition services included in this tier are related to career research experiences and will support the student to dig further to make informed choices about a specific career interest or pathway gained from hands-on, authentic experiences.

To determine the student's transition services needs, ask the questions:

1. What can the student do to learn more about the career area of interest and education/training requirements?
2. Who will be responsible for conducting, monitoring, and evaluating impact (student, school, family, outside agencies)?

Tier 2: Examples of Transition Services

- Know about disability and request accommodations
- Research career interests to identify work tasks, education and training requirements, job outlook, and salary
- Research various education and training paths to enter field of interest
- Tour Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) in Virginia
- Conduct an informational interview with military branch offices
- Take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)
- Prepare required identification and resume for employment
- Obtain a part-time job in a preferred career field
- Learn more about the voucher for Ticket to Work through SSA and interview providers
- Contact Disability Support Services (DSS) to determine documentation requirements needed and available supports for college
- Visit college campuses and meet with student support services
- Apply for college or vocational training scholarships
- Take a college entrance exam
- Enroll in SAT/ACT prep classes
- Enroll in an pre-apprenticeship program
- Research, interview, evaluate employment providers
- Participate in paid/unpaid internship in career field or environment
- Prepare for industry certification

Tier 2: Examples of Transition Services (continued)

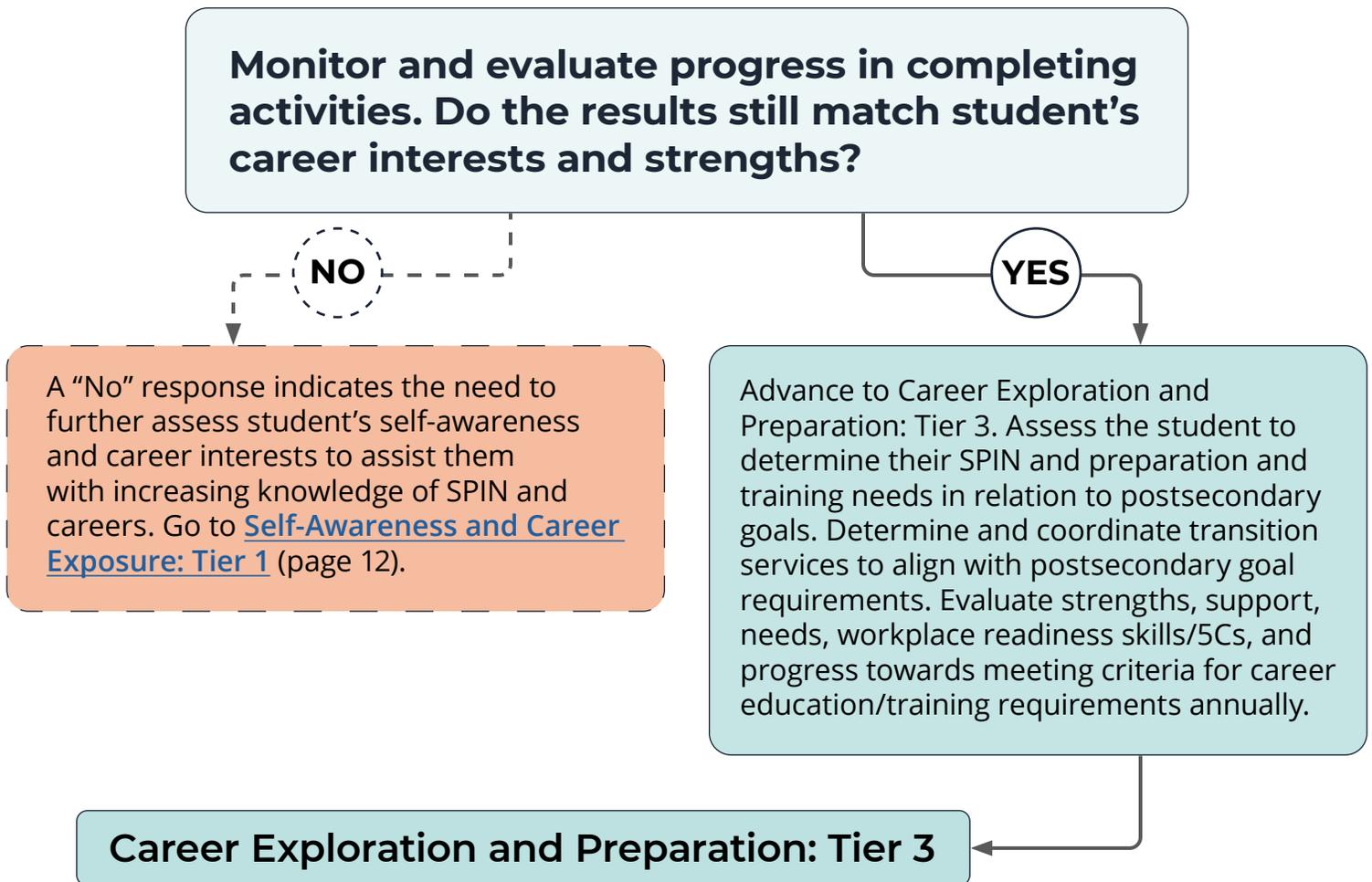
Consider implementing or revisiting the following transition services:

- Build upon workplace readiness skills and 5Cs
- Practice interviewing skills
- Review Academic and Career Plan
- Develop a career portfolio
- Complete travel training
- Contact DBVI to discuss employment services
- Build opportunities in the home to increase independence
- Complete a referral to your local CSB
- Build resume and cover letter
- Take driver's education
- Participate in a workplace or an industry tour
- Research and apply to community supports and services
- Schedule a visit with the local DARS office to determine eligibility for services
- Volunteer in career field or work environment of interest
- Seek out career mentor
- Enroll in CTE courses that align with career interests
- Obtain state identification card or driver's license
- Identify best travel option
- Explore accessibility tools with apps, programs, and devices to support academic skills and organization

Once the services, activities, and person responsible for conducting these services have been identified, document this information in the required section in the student's IEP.

Instruct and Evaluate

While the IEP is required to be reviewed annually, progress towards postsecondary goals and implementation of transition activities should be evaluated more frequently. It is natural for a student's transition plan to evolve over time, and evaluating progress of transition activities helps the student and their team stay focused on goals that match the student's strengths and interests. Then answer the next question in the decision tree below.



Identify Assessment Needs and Assess

Transition assessment tools included in this tier are related to career preparation and training requirements, postsecondary education/training requirements, and self-determination.

To determine the student's assessment needs, ask the questions:

1. What information is needed to further prepare for the student's postsecondary goal and its education and/or training requirements?
2. What informal or formal assessment measures do you need to administer to gather student skill levels in preparation for employment and postsecondary environments?

Types of assessment can include but are not limited to:

- Student **and** parent interview
- Adaptive behavior assessment
- Workplace readiness and 5Cs skill assessment
- Adaptive behavior assessment
- PSAT/SAT/ACT
- Self-advocacy and self-determination assessment
- Employee performance evaluation
- Orientation and mobility assessment in a work environment
- CTE industry certification

Analyze Data

Once the student completes the assessments, analyze the data to identify the student's SPIN and vision for life after high school. Summarize the data gathered with the student and include this information in the student's PLAAFP section of their IEP. With the student and IEP team, develop postsecondary employment and education/training goals that align with the student's strengths and interests.

Align student's course of study and continue to develop work-based experiences and other transition activities to allow the student opportunities to prepare for his or her postsecondary employment and education/training goals. Continue to evaluate SPIN, workplace readiness skills/5Cs, self-determination and advocacy skills, and progress towards meeting criteria for career education/training requirements in the career area of choice.

Determine and Coordinate Transition Services

Transition services included in this tier are related to preparing and training for the transition to employment.

To determine the student's transition services needs, ask the questions:

1. What can the student do to prepare and train for the education/training requirements of his or her postsecondary employment goal?
2. Who will be responsible for conducting, monitoring, and evaluating impact (student, school, family, outside agencies)?

Tier 3: Examples of Transition Services

- Explore accessibility tools with apps, programs, and devices to support academic skills and organization
- Know your rights and responsibilities in postsecondary education, training, and employment
- Consider accommodation and supports needed for employment
- Participate in a mock interview
- Complete job application
- Participate in on-the-job training
- Explore summer employment opportunities
- Attend a vocational training program
- Understand the summary of performance
- Participate in career-related competitions
- Register with DSS to coordinate services and request college accommodations

Tier 3: Examples of Transition Services (continued)

Consider implementing or revisiting the following transition services:

- Obtain a part-time job in career area of interest
- Practice interviewing skills
- Develop a career portfolio
- Prepare required identification and resume for employment
- Schedule a visit with the local DARS office to determine eligibility for services
- Contact DBVI to obtain employment services
- Complete a referral to your local CSB
- Learn more about the voucher for Ticket to Work through SSA and interview providers
- Identify best travel option
- Volunteer in career field or environment of interest
- Participate in paid/unpaid internship in career field or environment
- Communicate and attend appointments with DARS counselor and other service agency providers
- Take occupational specific course(s) and earn industry certification
- Build resume and cover letter

Once the services, activities, and person responsible for conducting these services have been identified, document this information in the required section in the student's IEP.

Instruct and Evaluate

While the IEP is required to be reviewed annually, progress towards postsecondary goals and implementation of transition activities should be evaluated more frequently. It is natural for a student's transition plan to evolve over time, and evaluating progress of transition activities helps the student and their team stay focused on goals that match the student's strengths and interests.

Continue to annually assess, determine, and coordinate transition activities to assist the student in obtaining the training and preparation needed to meet his or her postsecondary goal requirements.

Final Considerations

Transition assessment results and their review are an integral process to creating a student-centered transition plan focused on strategic steps to support students' desired post-school outcomes.

Throughout the process, please keep the following considerations in mind:

- The purpose of the transition assessment process is to develop and/or refine a measurable postsecondary goal that matches students' strengths, preferences, interests, and needs.
- It is natural to expect that students' interests will evolve as they have opportunities to explore, self-reflect, and participate in authentic experiences over time.
- The postsecondary employment goal needs to be modified and further refined over time to match students' strengths, preferences, interests and needs as they evolve.
- Successful transition planning requires ongoing collaboration among students, families, service agencies, and school professionals to coordinate appropriate activities and services.
- Transition assessments, completed with purpose and understanding, are the true building blocks of high-quality transition plans that ultimately lead to successful post-school outcomes.

At the conclusion of the transition assessment process, students, families, service agencies, and school professionals should be confident that the information gathered has contributed to the development of a high-quality transition IEP. In order to finalize the IEP, you will also need to develop the annual goals, course of study, and include outside agency and service provider collaboration to assist the student in getting closer towards reaching their desired post-school outcomes.

Glossary of Terms

Age-Appropriate Transition Assessment

Age-appropriate transition assessment is a required, ongoing, responsive set of activities designed to examine a student's strengths, preferences, interests, and needs in the areas of postsecondary education, employment, training, and, as appropriate, independent living. Teams should also consider strengths, preferences, interests, and needs related to leisure/recreation skills, relationships, transportation, finances, self-determination, and community living as each of these will influence an individual's quality of life and access to employment, training, and postsecondary education.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, mentorship, and a portable credential.

Authentic Experiences

Authentic environments provide a realistic context to an authentic task; it is the actual environment in which a task is performed.

Career Clusters

A career cluster is a group of careers that share common features. Career clusters help students investigate careers and select their course of study. Virginia has adopted the nationally recognized structure of 16 career clusters and has added a 17th cluster for Energy.

Career Goal

A career goal is a statement that describes a specific profession an individual intends to pursue and is used to develop an action plan identifying the steps needed to reach that career.

Career Pathway

A career pathway is a smaller group of jobs within a career cluster that use similar skills.

Career Research Activities

Career research activities help an individual identify a career path by identifying details about careers such as: nature of work, working conditions, education and training requirements, job outlook, earning potential, and related careers.

Coordinated Set of Activities

A coordinated set of activities for transition services is a broad detailed plan of strategies and/or actions for reaching a student's desired post-school outcome; this includes specifics of what will happen, when it will occur, who is involved, and who is responsible. Activities typically include instruction, community experiences, and related services.

Course of Study

A multi-year plan of coursework necessary to achieve the student's postsecondary goals from the student's current to anticipated graduation year.

Five Cs of Virginia

The Virginia Department of Education developed the Five Cs as foundational principles for instruction to prepare and equip students with the skills and knowledge they need for success after graduation from high school. The Five Cs include critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship skills.

Functional Vocational Evaluation

A functional vocational evaluation is an assessment to determine the student's strengths, abilities, and needs in an actual or simulated work setting or in real work sample experiences.

Informational Interview

An informational interview is an informal conversation that a student can conduct to gather information from a professional who is in a career field they are interested in.

Internship (paid or unpaid)

An internship is a temporary position with an emphasis on on-the-job training rather than solely on employment, and can be paid or unpaid. An internship is an opportunity for the student to develop specific job-related skills before actually being employed. The U.S. Department of Labor has rules and regulations regarding internships and wages.

Job Exploration

Job exploration is providing a variety of opportunities for an individual to gain information about careers, learn about the skills needed for different jobs, and uncover personal career interests.

Person-Centered Planning

Person-centered planning is an ongoing strengths-based process used to assist individuals with disabilities to plan for their future. People who know the student best gather together to share information and support the student in determining a vision of his or her future goals.

Postsecondary Education and Training

Postsecondary education and training is a term used to describe any training that occurs after high school leading to increased employability and job opportunities.

Postsecondary Goals

Postsecondary goals are the goals a student plans to achieve after high school graduation. For students with disabilities, it is required that students have measurable postsecondary goals in the areas of employment, education and training, and independent living, where appropriate.

Self-Advocacy Skills

Self-advocacy skills are the necessary skills to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert one's interests, desires, needs, and rights.

Self-Determination

Self-determination is the right and ability of a person to direct their own life, as well as the responsibility to accept the consequences of their choices. It also includes the capacity to make decisions, choose preferences, practice self-advocacy and self-determination skills, and manage one's own affairs.

SPIN

SPIN is an acronym for a student's strengths, preferences, interests, and needs in the home, school, and community. Strengths are tasks or actions an individual does well. Preferences means liking one thing over another. Interests are what the student likes to do during free time, like being part of a team, club, or organization and engaging in hobbies. Needs can describe accommodations that work, particular challenges, and how others can help.

Situational Assessment

A situational assessment is the process of gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing data to determine the best match between the student, a type of job, and work environment.

Strengths-Based

Using a strengths-based approach to transition assessment focuses on the strengths and self-determination aptitudes of the student and how these abilities can be used to assist the student in determining their postsecondary goals in employment, education and training, and independent living.

Student-Centered

Student-centered transition planning actively involves students in planning, communicating, and evaluating their progress toward their postsecondary goals.

Transition Services

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that are focused on improving their academic and functional achievement. These activities promote movement from school to post-school activities, that includes integrated employment, postsecondary education and training, and independent living. Services are based on the student's strengths, preferences, interests and needs, and include: instruction; related services; community experiences; development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. Transition services must be included in all IEPs when the student reaches the age of 14 or younger if deemed appropriate and necessary.

Vocational Evaluation

A vocational evaluation is used to help an individual with identifying career interests, aptitudes, and academic skills.

Work-Based Learning Experiences

Work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities are supervised, school-coordinated activities which provide opportunities for students to achieve employment related competencies in a workplace environment. These activities extend the classroom into the workplace and are related to students' career interests, and Academic and Career Plan and course of study.

Workplace Readiness Skills

Workplace readiness skills have been identified by employers as the most essential skills needed for entry-level workers. VDOE created the 21st Century Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth to reflect the current needs of employers and to better prepare students to enter the workforce and be successful in their chosen careers.

Gather and analyze existing data from multiple sources, collaborators and environments regarding the student's strengths, preferences, interests, and support needs (SPIN) as it relates to employment.

No follows the Self-Awareness and Career Exposure path.

Yes follows the Career Exploration and Preparation path.

"Does the student have a specific career cluster interest, pathway, or career goal that matches his or her SPIN?"

If **No**, then go to [1A](#). If **Yes**, then go to [2A](#).

1. If **No**, then:

A. Assess student's self-awareness and career awareness to assist them with increasing knowledge of SPIN and careers. Do the results uncover career interests or preferences that match a specific career cluster?

i. If **Yes**, then go to [2B](#).

ii. If **No**, assess the student utilizing a more targeted approach to gather the information to isolate specific career goals of interest that match student strengths. Do the results uncover career interests or preferences that match a specific career cluster?

a. If **Yes**, then go to [2B](#).

b. If **No**, assess the student using a more individualized approach to uncover SPIN and build career exposure and exploration activities within the school, home, and community. The results will uncover student strengths and interests. Determine and coordinate transition activities to further explore interests, increase self-determination, and prepare for employment.

i. Go to [2A](#).

2. If **Yes**, then:
 - A. Assess to determine student's SPIN and preparation needs in relation to postsecondary goals.
 - B. Determine and coordinate transition services to align with postsecondary goal requirements.
 - C. Monitor and evaluate progress in completing activities. Do the results still match student's career interests and strengths?
 - i. If **No**, then go to [1A](#).
 - ii. If **Yes**, assess to determine student's SPIN and preparation and training needs in relation to postsecondary goals. Determine and coordinate transition services to align with postsecondary goal requirements. Monitor and evaluate progress in completing activities. Do the results still match student's career interests and strengths?
 - a. If **No**, then go to [1A](#).
 - b. If **Yes**, assess the student to determine their SPIN and preparation and training needs in relation to postsecondary goals. Determine and coordinate transition services to align with postsecondary goal requirements. Evaluate strengths, support needs, workplace readiness skills/5Cs, and progress towards meeting criteria for career education/training requirements annually.



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