Age-Appropriate Transition Assessment At-A-Glance

LEGAL REQUIREMENT

Federal law requires that postsecondary goals must be based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills. [34 CFR § 300.320(b)(1)]

WHAT IS AATA?

Age-appropriate transition assessment is an ongoing process of collecting information about a student's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future education, employment, independent living, and community environments.

KEY PURPOSES

- Identify student's preferences, interests, needs, and strengths (PINS)
- Provide foundation for measurable postsecondary goals
- Guide development of transition services activity areas and annual goals
- Measure progress toward transition readiness
- Support student self-awareness and self-determination

ASSESSMENT DOMAINS AND SAMPLE AREAS BY DOMAIN

- **Education/Training**: Academic skills, learning styles, study habits
- **Employment**: Career interests, work values, job skills, work behaviors
- **Independent Living** (when appropriate): Daily living skills, community access, financial management, self-care

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT METHODS CHECKLIST

Formal/Standardized
- Norm-referenced tests
- Published inventories
- Structured rating scales

Informal
- Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Observations
- Curriculum-based assessments
- Environmental analyses

Performance-Based
- Situational assessments
- Work samples
- Community-based evaluations
- Task analyses

Student Self-Assessment
- Interest inventories
- Preference assessments
- Self-determination measures
- Student interviews

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IMPLEMENTATION QUICK GUIDE

1. **Select** appropriate assessments across all required domains
2. **Administer** using accommodations when needed
3. **Document** results in present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
4. **Connect** findings directly to measurable postsecondary goals
5. **Update** assessments on an ongoing basis and no less frequently than annually

DOCUMENTATION ESSENTIALS

- Name specific assessments used
- Summarize key findings in student-friendly language
- Make explicit connections to measurable postsecondary goals
- Include student perspective on results
- Document preferences, interests, needs, and strengths identified in the assessment findings

COMMON BEST PRACTICE PITFALLS & QUICK SOLUTIONS

Pitfall	Quick Solution
Generic assessments not individualized	Select assessments based on student's communication, reading level, and disability
Only formal or only informal methods used	Use a combination of formal and informal assessment methods at least annually and whenever updates to the student's PINS is necessary.
Missing required domain	Use assessment selection checklist to ensure all areas are covered
Assessment data not clearly linked to goals	Explicitly state how assessment results inform each postsecondary goal
Outdated assessments	Update at least annually; more frequently when exploring new areas

SAMPLE DOCUMENTATION LANGUAGE

"Based on the Career Interest Inventory completed 10/15/24, Michael demonstrated strong interest in technology careers, particularly computer programming (highest score: 87%). The Learning Style Assessment showed preference for visual learning (76%) and working independently. During job shadow experiences at TechCorps and DataStream, Michael was observed to be highly engaged when working with coding activities. Michael reports that he wants to 'create software programs' and 'work for a technology company.' These assessment results support Michael's postsecondary education goal of attending college to study computer science."

Remember: *Quality transition assessment is ongoing, comprehensive, and student-centered.*