

Monthly tips and resources for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.

YOUTH*SOURCE: Chart Your Future

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Some people know their life's purpose from an early age. Most of us must discover our destiny by learning and trying new things. To make the best plan possible for your future, take part in designing your very own Transition Individualized Educational Program (TIEP).

What is a TIEP?

Teachers, parents, and others who help you think about your future create your TIEP at a meeting called a case conference. This meeting happens at least once every year starting with the year before high school, or you turn 14 years old. The conversation begins by looking at your strengths, needs, and interests. Then, you set goals, decide what steps to take to reach your goals, and set up the services to support your efforts.

Importance of self-advocacy

While many people can make suggestions and provide guidance for your life, you are the only one who will live it. That is why your involvement in the important decisions made at that meeting matters. The goals you set will guide you through school and into your work experiences. The discussions will help you plan to take on the responsibilities and freedoms that will be yours as you become an adult.

When you are at the table at your meeting, your interests and talents are the key points that everyone will be talking about. The most important voice in this process is YOUR voice. You don't want people to make decisions about your life without you. Your voice will help others understand what you need and will set you up for success in your future. The team will appreciate your efforts to define your path in a way that works for you.

Learning how to self-advocate

For your TIEP meeting you need to know lots of terms, answer questions, and make decisions. One way to become more familiar with this process is to take part in [YOUTH*SOURCE training](#).

YOUTH*SOURCE is a program that empowers youth ages 14–22 with a disability to learn to be their own best advocate. The sessions will help you to understand how you can be more meaningfully involved in creating a plan that will guide you through your school years and after. YOUTH*SOURCE training will help you figure out what you need to do now so that you are ready for the vision of what you want to do after high school.

In the training, you will identify the things needed to accommodate you, in classes and in other challenges outside of school. You will plan for things like job and career opportunities, future job training, living arrangements, transportation, community involvement, recreation, health, safety, and wellness.

You will practice participating in the important conversations about decisions to prepare you for your future. And you will learn how to tell others important things about yourself. When you develop the skills necessary to advocate for yourself now, you can use those same skills in making big decisions and taking actions as an adult.

What does the future hold?

While none of us has a crystal ball that can tell what the future holds, taking an active role in planning for the future certainly makes good outcomes more likely. We encourage you to ask your teacher to bring the no-cost YOUTH*SOURCE program to your school. During breaks throughout the year, parents can directly sign you up to take part outside of school. For more information or to get started, email youthteam@insource.org.



Resources

- [YOUTH*SOURCE program overview](#)
- [YOUTH*SOURCE newsletter](#)
- [YOUTH*SOURCE introductory video](#)

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