Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), Schools, and Families Working Together

Welcome Families!

This brief explains how the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) helps students with disabilities prepare for life after high school. It also explains how families, schools, and DRS work together to support student success.

What Is DRS?

DRS is an Oklahoma state agency that helps people with disabilities get ready for work and find competitive integrated employment (CIE). These jobs are in the community and pay at least minimum wage. DRS also offers transition services for students with disabilities while they are still in high school. You may also hear DRS called Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Voc. Rehab.

What Is WIOA?

DRS follows a federal law called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This law helps people with disabilities prepare for work, learn job skills, and become more independent. It also encourages schools, families, and DRS to work together early so students can explore careers and prepare for adulthood.

What Transition Services Does DRS Provide?

DRS provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services. DRS also offers Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI). These programs help students prepare for work and adult life.

What Are Pre-ETS?

Pre-ETS are often the first services students receive from DRS. These free services help students:

- Learn about careers
- Practice work and job skills
- Speak up for themselves and build independence
- Learn about college, training programs, and other choices after high school

Eligibility for Pre-ETS

A student may receive Pre-ETS with parent permission if they:

- Have a disability
- Are between ages 14 and 21
- Have not yet been approved for full VR or SBVI services

DRS calls this “potentially eligible” for services.

How Can My Child Get Pre-ETS?

DRS works with Central Tech, Kiamichi Tech, and the University of Oklahoma to provide Pre-ETS in schools across Oklahoma. Families can learn more and see if these services are available in their area by visiting the OU Pre-ETS website (transitionok.org) or scanning the QR code.

transitionok.org

Additional VR Services

Some students with disabilities may qualify for extra VR services if they apply and are eligible. These services may include:

- Job training

- Career counseling
- Help finding a job

DRS services do not replace services provided by the school. Instead, the school and DRS work together to support your child's transition goals.

How Do We Apply for VR Services?

Step 1: Get the VR/SBVI counselor's contact information. You can ask your child's special education teacher, email TransitionTeam@okdrs.gov, visit the DRS Office Locator (oklahoma.gov/okdrs/students/hs-locator), or scan this QR code.

DRS Office Locator

Step 2: Call the VR/SBVI counselor to schedule an appointment.

Step 3: Ask your child's teacher or VR/SBVI counselor for an application. You can also get one from the DRS Application for Service page (oklahoma.gov/okdrs) or by scanning this QR code.

DRS Application for Service

Step 4: Bring any medical and disability records you have.

Step 5: Attend the appointment and complete the application.

Step 6: The counselor reviews the application and decides if your child qualifies for additional services.

Step 7: If your child qualifies, DRS creates an **Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)**. The plan lists the employment goal and the services needed to reach that goal.

What Is the DRS Referral Process?

Schools must have written parent consent before referring a student to DRS. A referral connects the family with a VR/SBVI counselor. A referral is not an application and does not automatically qualify a student for services.

How DRS and Schools Work Together

- Schools share information about DRS with students with disabilities and their families.
- With parent permission, schools refer students with disabilities to DRS around age 15 ½ as part of transition planning.
- Schools may assist parents in completing the DRS application in some cases.
- Schools may contract with DRS for Pre-ETS services and other VR transition services.
- Schools may invite VR/SBVI counselors to resource information nights, transition fairs, and other school events to share about DRS services.
- Schools invite VR/SBVI counselors to attend IEP meetings to help make sure support matches the student's goals.
- Working together helps create a smoother path from school to adult life.

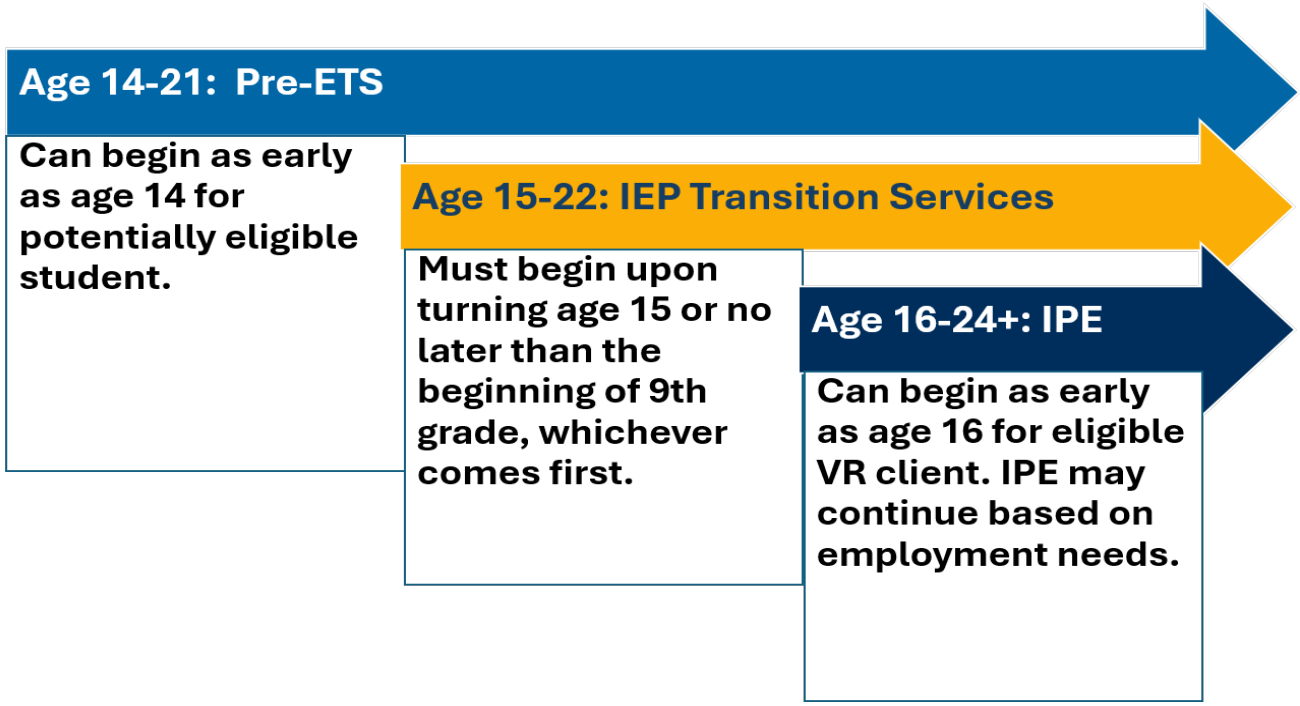
What Families Need to Remember

- DRS can help your child prepare for work and adult life.
- Schools and DRS work together to support successful transition planning.
- Families are important partners in the process.
- Starting early can help students reach their goals.
- Benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) can continue and be maintained by students and adults with disabilities who work.
- Work Incentive Coordinators at the Oklahoma Work Incentives Planning Assistance Program (OWIPA) can explain work incentives and benefits planning to help current students and families make informed decisions.

- VR/SBVI counselors also explain work incentives and benefits planning to their current VR-eligible students and families to show them how students can work and not lose important benefits.
- Visit the Families page on Plan Your Way OK (planyourwayok.com/families) for more information and resources.

Helpful Timelines for Families

This chart shows transition programs, who they help, and ages when Pre-ETS, IEP, and IPE services are provided.



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