

Considerations/Steps for 4+ Programs



FIRST, participation in a 4+ program is an **IEP TEAM decision**.

Purpose of 4+ programs: to give students vocational skills that will increase independence after high school

Remember:

- IMPORTANT: 4+ programs are **NOT** scholarship programs!
- The student remains on the district roster, so the district is responsible for paying for tuition/fees/etc.
- There are multiple 4+ programs in Iowa, yet each program has its own unique design
- Districts **DO NOT** have to support a specific program - - location to district is an important consideration.
- Not all 4+ programs have dorms, so districts may be responsible for renting an apartment, etc.

**** Prior to consideration**, the IEP team needs to determine if the services that the student needs, based on their IEP, can be met within their local district

- Can the Course of Study be changed to give additional vocational classes in their area of interest? (CNA, welding, etc.)
- If the student's schedule does not currently accommodate these classes, can they return for an additional semester or two of high school?
- Could the student benefit from a district School-to-Work program for job exploration and to learn employability skills?

**** The IEP team determines if unmet vocational needs **cannot** be met through the high school programming. If they cannot, continue with the following basic steps:**

STEP 1 – JUNIOR YEAR: Consideration of a 4+ program is an IEP TEAM decision

- This conversation should begin **NO LATER** than the start of the student's **junior year**. Document this on Page B in the "OTHER" section of the IEP.
- **Expectation criteria for potential 4+ students:**
 - Student has completed necessary credits but has unmet vocational needs/goals
 - Student has good attendance
 - Student is required to attend mandatory study times set up by the 4+ program
 - Student has independent living skills (they must comply with college housing & living guidelines even though they are still considered a high school students)
 - Student has socially responsible behavior

- If the IEP team recommends this as a possible option, the family **MUST** visit the program before the end of the student's junior year.
 - If the student needs to improve areas to be successful at a 4+ program, they have the remainder of high school to work on these
 - Can the student get up by him/herself?
 - Can the student take meds independently?
 - Does the student need to improve attendance?
 - Does the student need to improve hygiene/social skills, etc?

STEP 2 – SENIOR YEAR: The IEP team needs to meet again at the beginning of the student's **SENIOR** year to determine if they **RECOMMEND** the 4+ program for the student. Document in the OTHER section of IEP.

- **CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO NOTE:** A recommendation by the IEP team **DOES NOT** guarantee acceptance into the program. Completing these steps as early as possible in the senior year is very important.
- **Does the student now meet the expected criteria for 4+ programs?()**
- Families should be encouraged to complete the FAFSA in October of the senior year in case the student is not accepted into the 4+ program and the student chooses to attend college on his/her own. Always have a **Plan B!**
- The student and family need to set up another visit before Christmas - - to get application paperwork/etc. turned in as quickly as possible. **Programs have limited space for students each year.**
- District Responsibilities - - DOCUMENT in the OTHER section of IEP:
 - Pays for tuition, room & board or mileage, books
 - in some cases, tools, etc. but then they are property of the district
 - Graduation date is **CHANGED** to the completion of the 4+ program
- Parent/Student Responsibilities - - DOCUMENT in OTHER section of IEP:
 - High School Book Fee
 - Dorm Deposit
 - Basic supplies
 - Weekend meals/transportation



STEP 3 – WHILE ATTENDING 4+ :

- Student progress will be reviewed as deemed necessary by the IEP team for continuation of services. This could be done monthly, quarterly, each semester, etc.
 - If the 4+ program is not a good fit, the IEP team needs to meet to decide the next plan of action

NOTE: The IEP Team recommendation does NOT mean automatic acceptance into a 4+ program. Always have a Plan B!