Transition Study 2 (NTLS2), Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, and Marder (2007) report that youth with disabilities say they have strong, positive relationships with their parents and that parents are the first people these youth turn to for support. Student-centered transition planning must also be family-centered transition planning.

The 1990 Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legislation established the requirement to invite students with disabilities to participate in their IEP whenever transition services are discussed. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004) established that transition must be addressed by the age of 16 (some states have kept age 14 consistent with the 1997 IDEA regulations). To ensure that the IEP reflects student needs, interests, and preferences, student input must be obtained even if students choose not to, or are unable to, attend. Families must be advised prior to the IEP meeting that transition planning is a purpose of the meeting, and that the student will be invited. Parents and students are equal participants in the IEP decision-making process. Clearly, the IDEA 2004 legislation (§ 300.43) intended a strengths-based approach to transition planning.