

Transition Resources for Parents

So you have a son, daughter, or family member edging into or toward young adulthood. Because disability presents its own special challenges and can complicate moving from high school to the unknown world beyond, there's a great deal of common sense in planning ahead, preparing, and doing what you can to make that transition a straightforward and positive one. These transition resources are provided to lay a critical foundation of understanding on transition in law and in practice.

The ABCs of Transition

- ***Wondering what path your child will take after high school?***
www.transitioncoalition.org/~tcacs/new/files/brochure2.pdf
This brochure was created to help families understand the basics of transition planning, including its purpose, who is involved, and the process as a whole.
- ***You have homework.***
www.wrightslaw.com/heath/transition.work.htm
Doing Your Homework: Making the Transition from School to Work, a Wrightslaw information page, covers information for parents about transition planning in the IEP process. It also provides a brief discussion of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and many links to other sources of information.
- ***Supporting the dynamic development of youth with disabilities during transition: A guide for families.***
www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1432
The title says it all.
- ***Parent briefs on transition.***
www.ncset.org/publications/default.asp#parent
NCSET offers an entire transition series for parents. At the link above, you'll find such titles as: Age of Majority: Preparing Your Child for Making Good Choices; Preparing for Employment: On the Home Front; and several issues on Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
 - ***More information for parents from TATRA (A technical assistance project on the Rehabilitation Act).***
www.pacer.org/tatra/tatra.htm
The TATRA project at the Pacer Center and other Parent Information and Training projects help families learn how they can help young people with disabilities prepare for independent adult life in the community.
- ***Want to be a full participant in developing your child's IEP?***
www.nichcy.org/pubs/parent/pa12txt.htm
Take a look at NICHCY's Developing Your Child's IEP and learn how to effectively work with schools to meet the needs of your evolving child. While this document was written based on regulations for IDEA 1997 (and, thus, does not incorporate changes made by IDEA 2004), it will nonetheless be helpful in framing your participation as a parent. For the same information in Spanish, read Desarrollando el IEP de su Hijo, at: www.nichcy.org/pubs/spanish/pa12stxt.htm

- ***Want your near-adult to be an active player in planning his or her own life?***
www.nichcy.org/stuguid.asp
NICHCY's Student Guide to the IEP set will tell you how. The set includes two audio programs (one for students themselves, one for parents and professionals), a student's guide to the IEP, and a guide for parents and school personnel called Helping Students Develop Their IEPs.
- ***What's self-determination, and why is it important?***
www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=962
This brief outlines research on self-determination, suggesting that youth with disabilities who actively direct their own lives are more likely to successfully transition into adult life. In addition, the brief addresses development of self-determination skills and student-led Individualized Education Program meetings. Also included are descriptions and contact information for several self-determination curricula and helpful Web links.
 - ***One family's journey into self-determination.***
<http://thechp.syr.edu/Sheri.pdf>
Read Sheri's story and take the journey with her family. They learned so much about what self-determination means and the practical consequences of different ways of understanding the "self" in self-determination.
 - ***Fanning the flame.***
www.nichcy.org/stuguid.asp
What can parents do to fan the flame of individuality, interest, and talent in their child? How does that flame contribute to finding one's personal path in life? This set from NICHCY, called Relish is for More Than Hot Dogs, revolves around an audio program for young people about how to make your own sweet success. Accompanying workbooks are designed for the students themselves and for the many folks who support them in this question.
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Looking at Specific Aspects of Transition

The components of transition planning mirror the areas of life an adult might potentially pursue: employment, more education or training, independent living, community experiences, and recreation. Each of these areas is full of choices and possibilities to consider. To help you do just that...here's a selection of resources that focus in on one or more aspects of transition. Not all will be relevant to you and your son or daughter, but those that are can help shape your quest.

- ***Age of Majority.*** www.transitioncoalition.org/~tcacs/new/files/brochure1.pdf
This brochure tells you more about the upcoming changes in your child's legal status and can help you prepare accordingly through transition planning.
- ***Want to know more about functional vocational evaluation?***
www.seattleu.edu/ccts/func_eval/index.asp
Although this guide is specific to vocational evaluation in the State of Washington, it provides a good overview of the process for the rest of us, too.

- ***What does health have to do with transition? Everything!***
www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=2967
This Parent Brief provides information on the benefits of and strategies for including health in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. Health is an important factor to include even if chronic health concerns do not exist.
- ***Transition-age special education students and SSI: What parents should know.***
www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=65&type=topic&id=7
How does receiving Social Security affect families as their children move into adulthood? This brief shares families' experiences and suggests ways that families can manage SSI and use it to help a young adult prepare for his or her career.
- ***Making social security work for your young adult.***
www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=53&type=topic&id=7
How does receiving Social Security affect families as their children move into adulthood? This brief shares families' experiences and suggests ways that families can manage SSI and use it to help a young adult prepare for his or her career.
- ***Work-based learning.***
www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1222
Work-based learning is one way youth can identify interests, strengths, skills, and needs related to career development. A hands-on experience in a real setting, work-based learning opportunities can range from short-term introductory activities such as job shadowing, informational interviews, and workplace tours, to more long-term and intensive training such as workplace mentoring, apprenticeships, and paid employment. Volunteer work, service learning, and activities at a student's school site can also provide rich, work-based learning opportunities. Check it out in this brief from NCSET called "Work-Based Learning and Future Employment for Youth: A Guide for Parents and Guardians."
- ***To work or not to work.***
www.worksupport.com/resources/viewContent.cfm/501
"To Work or Not to Work" --- that is a question being asked by many individuals with disabilities and their family members as they begin to think about going to work in their local communities. This fact sheet addresses frequently asked questions by family members and provides answers to dispel the concerns parents have about their youth entering the workforce. The fact sheet comes out of the Virginia Commonwealth University RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention.
- ***Supported employment and the adult service system.***
<http://depts.washington.edu/~transctr/ETP.html>
From the Employment Training Program at the University of Washington, this information is a brief summary of ETP's 20 years of experience working with adults with developmental disabilities who benefit from supported employment and over 10 years of experience in working with adolescents as they transition from school to adult life.
- ***More on supported employment.***
www.doe.k12.de.us/exceptional_child/Transition/parent%20handbook.pdf
This parent handbook contains resources specific to Delaware, but those not living in that state will still find the planning process this guide provides useful in considering and preparing for supported employment.

- ***Personal assistance services in the workplace.***
www.jan.wvu.edu/media/PAS.html
This publication discusses personal assistance services (WPAS) in the workplace. It provides frequently asked questions regarding WPAS including its use as an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); examples of WPAS to accommodate job applicants and current employees with limitations due to sensory, cognitive, physical or mental health impairments; a list of WPAS resources; and a glossary of WPAS-related terminology.
- ***Employment 101.***
www.nichcy.org/enews/foundations/employment101.asp
There's a wealth of info about jobs and "getting employed" in NICHCY's Employment 101. If this is the transition area that interests or concerns you, we recommend taking a deeper look at the subject via the link above.
- ***Accommodations when taking the GED test.***
www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=GEDTS&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=12223
The GED Test measures an individual's knowledge and academic skills against those of today's traditional high school graduates. A GED credential is, roughly, the same thing as getting a high school diploma. That's why millions of people, many of them high school dropouts, have taken the GED Test to get a better job, continue their education, or to feel better about themselves. If your son or daughter has dropped out of school, then the GED may be something of interest to you both. The link above talks about changes that can be made in the way GED tests are administered if your son or daughter has a documented disability.
- ***Parenting postsecondary students with disabilities.***
www.heath.gwu.edu/PDFs/Parenting1.pdf
This guide from the HEATH Resource Center, the nation's clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities, discusses how to become the mentor, advocate, and guide your young adult needs.
- ***Financial aid for students with disabilities.***
www.heath.gwu.edu/PDFs/Creating%20Options%202006.pdf
This guide from the HEATH Resource Center, the nation's clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities, takes a look at what financial aid options are available for students with disabilities pursuing education after high school.
- ***Accommodations when taking the SAT.***
www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html
The College Board is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations on its tests. These tests are: the SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests, Advanced Placement Tests (AP), and PSAT/NMSQT. Read all about Services for Students with Disabilities at the link above.
- ***And non-degree options?***
www.heath.gwu.edu/factsheet.htm
HEATH offers two fact sheets discussing non-degree postsecondary options for individuals with disabilities. The link above drops you into the factsheet page, where you can select the two on non-degree postsecondary options.