

Dude, Where's My Transition Plan?





What is "Transition?"

Transition means changing from one thing to another. It's about your future.

Transitions can be exciting because the next step you take will be a whole new adventure. Transitions can also be a little scary because you might have to learn how to do things you haven't done before, and you may not be sure what to expect.

My parents and teachers keep talking about "transition planning." What is that?

When your parents, teachers or other adults in your school talk about "transition planning," they are talking about things you can do now to get ready for the time after you leave high school. That future may seem far away, but the more you plan now, the easier your first steps into the adult world will be.

When you were a young child, the grown-ups in your life probably did most of the planning for your future. That's okay because that was their job. The difference between being a young child and being a teenager is that planning for your future becomes your job. You need to decide on your dreams and goals for the future. Good transition planning will help you achieve those dreams.

In fact, in Virginia, transition planning is required to start by the time you are 14 years old.

You need to choose goals that matter to you. That means you need to figure out where you want to be and what you want to be doing.

Transition preparation:

- * takes several years;
- * Involves a lot of different people and learning a lot of new skills; and
- * helps develop a plan to help you reach your dreams!

What does my “Individualized Education Program (IEP)” have to do with transition planning?

For planning your life after high school, your Individualized Education Program (or IEP) is like a roadmap.

It shows where you are going and how you are going to get there. “Individualized” means ALL about you. Your IEP should show the goals you want to reach and the supports you need to reach them.

Paying attention to what’s in your IEP is how you can make sure that you learn the skills in high school to do what you want with your life after you graduate.

Your transition plan is part of your IEP. It is not a separate document. A good transition plan includes instruction and community participation and activities to support your goals.

Ask your teacher about a student-led IEP. This puts you in the driver's seat!





What are self-directed services?

Having “self-directed services” means you are in charge of the services you get. You can choose who provides those services, and tell the service provider what you need.

One important thing to know about self-directed services: They can’t happen without self-determination (knowing what you want and need) and self-advocacy (speaking up for yourself).

Learning how to speak up for yourself can be hard.

Once you know what you want and need, you have to be able to tell other people.

That’s the only way to make your dreams come true!





What do people mean when they talk about "transition services"?

Transitions often mean that you have to try doing things you haven't done before. The good news is that you don't have to figure out how to do all this by yourself. You can ask other people to help you when you need it.

To help students move from school to what they want to do after school, a team of people should help decide what transition services can be helpful. Transition services include college or other education after high school, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, community and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation.

Other supports can help you too. Sometimes we might need a person to help or maybe a thing (like a wheelchair or calculator). Sometimes we might need a service. Often, we need more than one kind of support at a time.

Whatever you need, you can be sure it isn't exactly the same as what everyone else needs. The key is to figure out what supports would be the most helpful to meet your own needs so that you can reach your own goals.



Advice from other students:

- Start work on transition planning early! Write down your goals, plans, and what you like.
- Learn good communication skills so you can tell people what you want.
- Learn about resources like SSI (Supplemental Security Income), vocational rehabilitation, mental health services, housing options, independent living centers, Medicaid waivers, college disability support services, adult services, and social groups and recreational activities. Get information on all available options.

- Take a more active role in meetings. Ask more questions!
- Join groups that can help, like local advocacy groups, church groups, and community education classes.
- Look into co-op and work-based learning programs which can be done through school.
- Get more work experience by volunteering. Even better, try to work part-time for pay.



- Take classes in independent living skills. Learn how to cook, do your laundry, clean your home, shop, budget, and how to recognize and count money.
- Find out how to access community resources, services and emergency systems, and how to get help filling out forms.
- Learn more about making good decisions, and then the self-advocacy skills to share them! Go for your dreams!



- If you can, learn how to drive and get your driver's license! If that's not for you, learn how to use other transportation systems like the bus!
- Be serious. Do your homework and budget your time. Learn to use a calendar or planner to write down your assignments and to help you plan time to study.
- List your strengths and challenges. Find out what you're good at and build on those strengths. When possible, work to improve the areas that are hard.
 - Set goals and go for them! Don't be disappointed if you can't do everything though, no one can!

List your strengths:

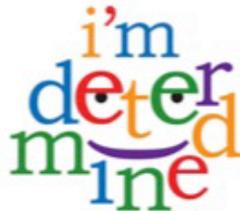
1. A time I felt really proud of myself was when...
 2. My best friend would describe me as a person who is...
 3. One thing that my teacher, boss, or parents have always liked about me is that I...
 4. One thing that I am interested in is...
 5. One of my skills that I hope to use in my work is...
-

Use this **One Pager** to organize important information about you. It can be used to introduce yourself to new teachers, employers, case managers and others to clarify your needs, strengths and interests.

Name:
Address:
DOB:

Date:

My Strengths



My Interests

My Preferences

My Needs

Setting Goals for Yourself

The I'm Determined Goal Plan is a visual representation of the steps you will need to accomplish a goal. Write your goal in the center of the sun. At the end of each sunray write an outcome that will result from meeting the goal. In the green box below the sun, write out the steps you need to reach the goal.

My Goal:

What I need to do to get there:

i'm
deter
mine

Reach your goals one step at a time:

One strategy for creating a goal for yourself can be remembered by the word STRONG:

- S- State clearly what you want to do.**
- T- Time period: How long before you accomplish this goal? Is it short-term or long-term (1-4 years or more)?**
- R- Requirements: What steps do you need to take to accomplish your goal?**
- O- Overcoming Obstacles: Plan for obstacles in your path.**
- N- Needs Review: Set a schedule for reviewing your progress and assess to make sure you're on track.**
- G- GOAL accomplished: Remember to celebrate your accomplishment!**

After High School, the Rules Change

BOTTOM LINE: Services available to you after high school are based on eligibility. In college and at a workplace, you will have to find the services you want or need and show that you qualify for them. You will also have to provide proof that accommodations are necessary!

This isn't high school, but you can be prepared.

Postsecondary education - Going to college or to a training school after high school will help increase your knowledge and prepare you for your chosen career. College provides a great opportunity to meet and socialize with other young adults. There are some services available through your college's student support services office. Contact them and learn what documents and other information regarding your disability they will need.

Employment - Many students choose to find employment instead of going full-time to college or technical training.

Finding employment can take some time. Part of your transition planning goals should address employment. You can learn job skills and participate in different types of employment in your community. Getting skills and having a part-time job before graduation will make it easier to get the kind of job you want after high school.

Vocational rehabilitation services may be useful. The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) has some great materials that help sort it all out. Check out the resource list at the end of this book!



Let's Compare:

High School Services	Adult Services
Special education and related services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); free and appropriate public education (FAPE)	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
School services are entitled by law (from ages 3-21 or until regular high school diploma requirements are met).	Adult services are based on eligibility which may be different for each agency. Consumers (you) apply for services needed through various adult service agencies.
School attendance is mandatory.	Consumers (you) decide to use an adult service agency to support them in their employment goals.
School districts are required to identify students with disabilities through free evaluations and the individualized education program (IEP) process.	Consumers (you) are responsible for disclosing and providing paperwork documenting a disability. They must be self-advocates!
Parents, caregivers and students are all involved in making decisions about IEPs and parents or caregivers give consent to services until the student is 18 years old.	The "age of majority" is 18 years. At that time the consumer (you) is responsible for the IEP. Students can still choose to have parents or caregivers act for or with them.
Services include individually designed instruction, modifications, and accommodations based on IEP.	Services are individually designed through Individual Plans for Employment or a similar individualized plan developed with the consumer (you).
Progress toward IEP goals is monitored and communicated to the parent(s) and/or student.	Progress toward employment goals are monitored by the consumer (you) and adult service provider. Self-advocacy is a must.
Schools assist in connecting the student with the community support agencies if so identified as a transition need according to the IEP. An agency representative can even be asked to attend IEP meetings.	Consumers (you) must request services needed and identify what agencies would best meet their needs.

Checklist: rate your self-advocacy skills

I can do this!	I need to work on this	I need help with this	These are some of the skills to stand up for yourself and get your needs met.
			Talking about my disability
			Knowing what my strengths are
			Setting goals for myself
			Working with others
			Sharing my ideas with others
			Knowing what I need to complete a task and requesting the accommodations that I need
			Knowing which people I can trust to ask for help
			Speaking up politely when I disagree
			Asking questions when I don't understand
			Taking active part in my IEP and transition planning meetings
			Being comfortable with my personal story and setting limits if I don't want to share parts
			Talking to my doctor about my health care



Money Matters

How much does your favorite food cost?

The things we want to do, like go to the movies, and the things we need to do, like eat, all cost money.

Do you have a budget? Whether or not you are making money now, you can start planning a budget that would help you plan to have money to spend later.

A great money resource is someone called a “money mentor.” Basically, a money mentor is an adult who you can look to for advice and guidance when it comes to money matters. These individuals, who are already in your life, can really help you make the most of your hard-earned money.

So who could you ask to be your money mentor? A good mentor is someone you know well and can trust, knows something about money, and shows a genuine interest in your success. Your parents are probably the first choice for helping teach you a thing or two about money, but there are other possibilities.

A local business owner, neighbor, or your favorite teacher can also be helpful. With your parents' permission, you might enlist the help of a trusted adult to teach you what they know about money. Many banks have young adult banking services. There are helpful programs and resources right in your own community. One example is a special needs trust that can be set up by an organization like The Arc. A trust can help you manage your money as an adult.



Where do you want to call home?



Home is a special place. It's not just where you live. It's the people you want to be with, and the things you want to have around you (like furniture, pictures, music, plants, and pets). It's activities you do like cooking, celebrating holidays, and having friends over. It's a place to relax and a place where you can choose to spend some time by yourself.

Where will you live after high school? Do you want to live on your own or with others? Will you live with your family or move in with a roommate? Do you want to live in the city or out in the country?

Living arrangements are what you do to live where and how you want to live.

I've always lived in my parent's home. What other choices are out there?

There are many choices you can make about where and how you will live after high school. Here are some choices of living arrangements:

Buying a home is a dream for many people, but it can be hard to do right out of high school. You need to have saved a lot of money, have a steady job that pays enough money, and be able to show that you pay your bills on time. This might be something you want to plan to do in the future.

Renting is when you pay someone money to live in a home that they own.

It usually costs less than buying your own home. Renting a home costs money, too, but if you earn enough money, or have family that can help, or if you choose to live with other people so you can all share the expenses, renting a home might be something you can afford to do now.

Who can help me get housing that I can afford?

People with disabilities should have accessible housing. There may be vouchers, rental assistance and other programs that can help with rental costs. Organizations like the *Virginia Fair Housing Office* and the *TAC Resource Center on Supportive Housing* can guide you. Find these and other resources on page 25.

There are agencies (formal supports) that provide other choices for living arrangements:

- A few people live together (these are called group homes or supervised apartments)
- People get the supports they need to live on their own in their own homes (this is called supported living)
- People live with other families (these are called foster or sponsor families)

Independent living means living in your own home and directing your own supports.

If you choose independent living as an option, you can still receive the supports you need, but it's your responsibility (again, with help from family and friends if you need it) to manage those supports.

These supports are often paid for with both your own money and money from a government funding source like Medicaid. Medicaid waivers help pay for people with disabilities to live in their community with the supports they need to be successful. In Virginia, there are several kinds of waivers and most have a long waiting list, so it is important to learn about these options early.



Transportation

How do you get to your friends' homes? When you need something from the store, how do you get there?

When you are planning for life as an adult, you also have to think about how you're going to get where you want to go.

If your parents or caregivers drive you where you need to go, have you talked about putting a driving schedule together that considers your time and their time?

Is there a bus route that could take you where you need to go? What's stopping you from finding out? How can you find out what public transportation is in your area?

As part of your Individualized Education Program, you can begin working with Vocational Rehabilitation to prepare to meet your transportation needs.

Transportation resources for persons with disabilities can be found at <http://easyaccess.virginia.gov/transportation.shtml>. Local governments may have "paratransit" services you can ask about.

To qualify for a regular Driver's License in Virginia:

- * You must be at least 16 years and 3 months of age (to get a learner's permit, you must be 15 years and 6 months of age).
- * You must pass a vision screening and a knowledge test to get your learner's permit.
- * You must complete a drivers education program (if you are under age 19).



Checklist: your health care



	Yes	Someone else does this	I need to learn this
I understand my health care needs and can explain them to others.			
I can explain to others how my customs or beliefs might affect my health care decisions.			
I call for my own doctor appointments.			
I prepare questions for my doctor before the appointment.			
I know what medications I take, what they are for and how much I take and when (dosages)			
I know when I need to refill my prescriptions and how to order refills.			
I know my symptoms that need quick medical attention.			
If I feel a seizure coming on, I know to alert those around me and move to a safe place.			
I help monitor my medical equipment so that it is working well.			
I know where my medical records are at home.			
I have a plan so that I will have health insurance when I become an adult.			

My Health Care

My Doctors:

Dr. _____ is who I see for general care and check-ups, and for

I see my doctor _____ (weekly/monthly/yearly/as needed).

The office I go to is at: _____. I get there by: _____

My Specialty Doctors:

1) I see Dr. _____ for _____

I see this doctor _____ (weekly/monthly/yearly/as needed).

The office I go to is at _____. I get there by: _____

2) I see Dr. _____ for _____

I see this doctor _____ (weekly/monthly/yearly/as needed).

The office I go to is at _____. I get there by: _____

My Medication:

I take _____

Dr. _____ at _____ (phone) prescribed the medication(s).

I take my medicine in the (morning/lunch/evening/bedtime): _____.

The reason I take the medication(s) is _____

I go to _____ to get my medication(s).

Things that are important to know about my medication(s) and how they may affect me are:

Special Equipment or Supplies:

The mobility devices I use are: _____

Other special equipment I use is: _____

I use these (every day/ when eating/ when I travel): _____

I have _____ kind of seizures. During a seizure I need: _____

I do _____ / do not _____ have an electronic personal health record (electronic backpack).

Cheatsheet: Allergies and Emergencies



I am allergic to: _____

This is how I might react: _____

My eyes water:	Yes	No
I sneeze:	Yes	No
My behavior might change:	Yes	No
I break out in a rash:	Yes	No
I may have swelling:	Yes	No
I have difficulty breathing:	Yes	No

If I have an allergic reaction, you can help me by: _____

Do you know what to expect if you have an allergic reaction? It's important that you share this with your friends and coworkers and tell them what to do if that happens.

I carry an EpiPen	Yes	No
I carry an Inhaler	Yes	No
I wear a Medical Alert Bracelet	Yes	No

A Medical Alert Bracelet or Necklace is usually engraved with information about your allergy, disability or special healthcare need. In case of an emergency it can help alert medical personnel to your needs.

Do you have an In Case of Emergency (ICE) Person & Information?

If you carry a cell phone, choose the contacts you would want to be called in case you have an emergency. Next to their phone number, put the letters "ICE" and rescue workers or medical personnel will know who to call.



Do you have a Food Allergy?

Tell your friends and coworkers about your food allergies. Don't give in and try a food that might make you sick. Suggest restaurants that are less likely to serve food that you are allergic to (for example if you are allergic to shellfish, stay away from seafood restaurants).

Tell food servers about your food allergy. Explain the medical need to avoid the food. Ask for a list of ingredients before placing your order.

Tips:

- Choose simple items from the menu that do not have sauces and spices
- Test the food before eating it: look at the food, smell it, and take small bites first.

Tips for Internet Safety

Personal Information: Don't share your last name, home address, school name, age or phone number. Just because someone asks for information about you does not mean you have to tell them anything. Remember that posting information about your friends could put them at risk.

Screen Name: When creating your screen name or user name, do not include personal information like your last name or date of birth.

Online Friends: Don't agree to meet an online friend unless you have your parents' permission and meet them with someone you trust. Do not meet them alone. Unfortunately, sometimes people pretend to be someone they are not. Remember that not everything you read online is true.

Photos: Think before posting your photos. DO NOT send messages or post semi-nude or nude pictures of yourself or anyone else! Personal photos should not have identifying information such as the license plate of your car, name of your school or name of your apartment complex in the background.

Use the privacy settings of social networking sites: Set it so that people can only be added as your friend or to contact you if you approve it. Set it so that people can only view your profile or information about you if you have approved them.

Downloading: Make sure the online file or program you want to download is trustworthy. If you're not sure, Google it first to make sure other people haven't already found out that it's a virus. Email attachments sometimes contain viruses. Never open an attachment from someone you don't know.

Bullying: Don't send or respond to mean or insulting messages. If something happens online that makes you feel uncomfortable or seems wrong, talk to your parent, caregiver, or a teacher.

Passwords: Don't share your password with anyone except your parents. When you use a public computer, make sure you log out of all your accounts before leaving. Keep your passwords somewhere safe.

Online Ads: Don't buy anything online before making sure it is from a trustworthy seller. Look it up first.

Nothing is free: Some ads try to trick you by offering free things or telling you that you have won something as a way of collecting your personal information. Don't do it!

Quiz: Adult Rights & Responsibilities

I can vote in State and Local Elections	True	False
I can start voting for President when I turn age 21	True	False
I can sign by myself to get a loan (for example: to pay for school or a car)	True	False
If I do not have enough money, I do not have to pay back my loan or credit card debt	True	False
At the doctor's office, in order to receive medical treatment, I have to sign to give "informed consent"	True	False
I cannot get medical treatment unless my parent is informed and also gives consent	True	False
I can control who gets to see my personal medical information	True	False
I can live wherever I want to live	True	False
I can buy and drink alcohol	True	False
I can buy and smoke cigarettes	True	False
I can be called to serve on a jury to make a decision about a case in court	True	False



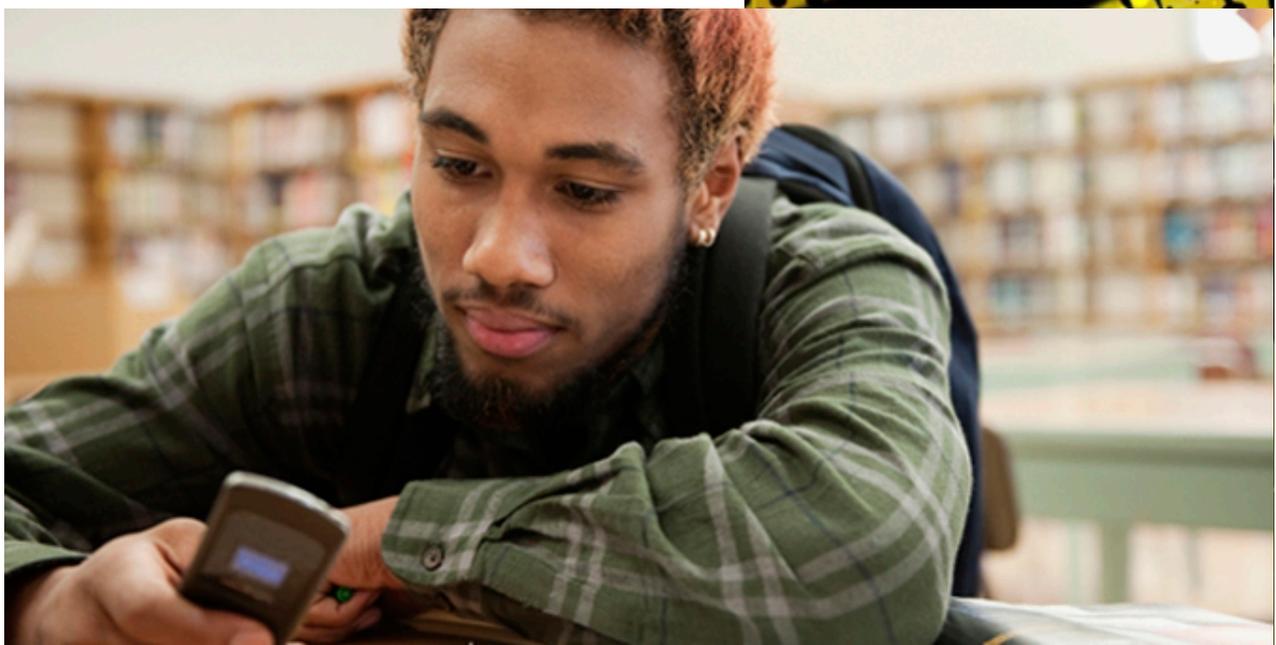
Answers: Adult Rights & Responsibilities Quiz

- In the U.S.A. when you turn eighteen and are a citizen, you can vote for local, state and federal elections...including for your choice of President!

Register to vote in Virginia at www.vote.virginia.gov

- There are different kinds of loans. To qualify for most loans, you have to be 18; for student loans sometimes you can be younger. You have to be a legal citizen, and have a history of responsible borrowing or "credit." It takes time to build "good credit," and without it you probably need someone who does have good credit to help you get the loan. This person, typically someone like your parents, is called a "co-signer."
- When you are older than 18, you are responsible for the way you spend your money. If you don't have enough to pay back a loan or credit card bill, you will need to work with your bank or credit card company to pay them back as soon as you can. When you are younger than 18, your parents are still responsible for you, and therefore they're still on the line to help you pay back what you owe.

- To receive medical treatment, the doctor must know that you understand the treatment that you need, and that you want it. If you aren't able to understand your options for medical treatment, or explain what you want, then someone like your parent or legal guardian must provide "informed consent" before you receive treatment.
- After you turn eighteen, you have the right to live wherever you want. There are different living arrangements that adults can choose. However, whether you have the money to live the way you want to live is just one of the things that you must consider before making this decision.
- When you turn 21, you are legally allowed to buy and drink alcohol. You are also responsible to know if you should not drink alcohol because of the medicine you take.
- When you turn eighteen, you are legally allowed to buy and smoke tobacco products, like cigarettes. However, we recommend against it, since on average, smokers die 13 to 14 years earlier than nonsmokers.
- Serving on a jury of your peers is one of the most important roles that we have as citizens. When you turn eighteen and are a citizen, as long as you can do the job with or without reasonable accommodations, you can be called to be a juror. For more information about reasonable accommodations go to www.ada.gov or contact the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center at www.adainfo.org.
- **BONUS INFO:** Did you know that you can request new evaluations before you graduate or leave high school for your life as an adult? The school system has 65 business days to complete testing. Also, as your last year of high school starts, make sure that your state-mandated summary of performance is scheduled. This information can be helpful for your college or trade school and beyond!



Great Resources on Transition:

www.nasetalliance.org

National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition (NASET) is a coalition of more than 40 organizations that work to 1) Identify what youth need in order to achieve successful participation in postsecondary education and training, civic engagement, meaningful employment, and adult life; and 2) Prioritize and address significant issues of national scale that have an impact on the provision of effective secondary education and transition services and policies for all youth.

www.parentcenterhub.org/topics/transitiontoadult/

Youth with disabilities need to plan ahead for their transition from high school. In fact, the law mandates it! This site gets you connected to a wealth of materials and knowledge related to transition.

www.gottransition.org/

This site serves as the basis for an information exchange about health care transition, particularly the transition for youth with special health care needs.

<http://ahead.org/students-parents>

The Association on Higher Education and Disability has frequently asked questions for students and parents/caregivers, & lists many transition resources.

<http://www.pacer.org/tatra/>

The national Parent Center on Transition and Employment at PACER Center features transition planning, education and employment resources.

Top Transition Resources in Virginia:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/transition_svcs/index.shtml

Virginia Department of Education's Transition Services website provides support, information and resources designed to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities in transition from middle / secondary education to postsecondary education and employment.

http://www.imdetermined.org/transition_guide/

Virginia Department of Education's I'm Determined project offers many resources for helping you take control of your life. The transition guide covers independent living, education, employment and self-determination.

<http://www.vadsa.org>

The Virginia Disability Services Agencies website offers a comprehensive list of agencies and resources related to disability services, communication, community living, education, rights, transportation and other services in Virginia.

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/fc/independent.cgi>

The Virginia Department of Social Services operates an Independent Living Program (ILP) for foster care youth age 14-21 to help with the transition from foster care to independent living. Project LIFE (<http://www.vaprojectlife.org>) has a lot of resources just for youth and young adults.

www.peatc.org

PEATC (see page 26) has great videos about transition, available on demand.

Housing Resources:

<http://www.vhda.com/Pages/Home.aspx>

The Virginia Housing Development Authority runs several programs that assist with housing costs, as well as providing disability-accessible housing.

<http://811resourcecenter.tacinc.org>

The TAC Resource Center on Supportive Housing provides information about supportive housing and HUD Section 811 programs to the disability community, agencies and others.

Employment Resources:

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>

"Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success," is a curriculum developed by U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy focused on teaching "soft" or workforce readiness skills to youth, including youth with disabilities.

Post-Secondary Education:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>

"Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities" covers admission, academic adjustments & discrimination complaints.

Health Care Resources:

<http://www.vacsb.org/csb-bha.html>

Community Services Boards throughout Virginia are responsible for assuring delivery of community-based mental health, developmental and substance abuse services to individuals who have mental health, substance use disorders, and/or intellectual disabilities. This includes emergency mental health services.

<http://www.healthshack.info>

HealthShack helps youth by providing a safe and simple-to-use site where you can store personal information such as your medical record, social security card, school transcript, and housing history. This is great for all youth, but particularly for youth in foster care and other service systems.

<http://www.appventive.com/ice>

This application for cell phones and mobile devices stores your In Case of Emergency (ICE) information such as people to call, allergies and medications. Emergency workers can look for this information if you were ill or injured.

Other Support Programs:

http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/Content_pgs/ltc-home.aspx

Long term care and waiver services are available from the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services. Medicaid waivers can assist individuals with disabilities get coverage for personal assistance services, respite care and transition services, among others.

<http://www.thearcofnovatrust.org>

Special needs trusts can be established for loved ones with disabilities to help manage money, assets and protect government benefits.



Help for families in Virginia:



PEATC is Virginia's federally-funded special education Parent Training and Information center. PEATC is committed to reaching all families, schools and communities as they build positive futures for Virginia's children.

www.peatc.org call 1-800-869-6782 or 703-923-0010
partners@peatc.org



Formed Families Forward provides training and support to families formed through adoption, foster care and kinship care who are raising children with special needs.

www.formedfamiliesforward.org call 703-539-2904
info@formedfamiliesforward.org

Credits:

FAMILY VOICES of Tennessee

This document was based in large part on a transition booklet created by Family Voices of Tennessee, a program of the Tennessee Disability Coalition. Thank you to Sarah Sampson, editor, for permission to use the templates, graphics and much content.

www.tndisability.org/familyvoices

STEP, Inc. collaborated on the original document. STEP, Inc. serves as Tennessee's Parent Training and Information Center and improves the lives of Tennessee families of children with disabilities.



www.tnstep.org

Notes: