



Focus on **TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD**

Quick Guide in the *Life Experience Series*

Transition means that you are moving from childhood to young adulthood and from school to adult life.

There are many things to think about and do to prepare for this change. Transition is a point in time filled with change, growth, excitement, and sometimes fear and confusion.



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DAILY LIFE & EMPLOYMENT

What a person does as part of everyday life— school, employment, volunteering, communication, routines, life skills

It may seem like it is a long way off, but sooner than you think, the bus will stop coming, and you will no longer be going to school during the day. Have you thought about what you will do during the day when school ends? Have you talked about what you want to do with your parents/family? What kind of changes might this mean for your family?

- Who is helping me create a transition plan that is truly individualized and prepares me for life after school ends?
- How does my transition plan include work or volunteer experience, as well as practicing how to look for, get and keep a job?
- What kind of job do I think I would like to try (what do I like to do or want to learn more about)?
- What supports will I need for either work or other daytime activities, and who will provide those supports?



COMMUNITY LIVING

Where and how someone lives— housing and living options, community access, transportation, home adaptations and modifications

Have you thought about where you might live as an adult? There are many options to consider— some are more traditional (for instance, a group home), but more and more, there are many “non-systems” community options emerging (like owning your own home). Anything is possible if you plan ahead, think creatively and believe!

- Where do I think I might want to live in the future (after school ends/when I am an adult)?
- How am I learning about different living options for when I am an adult?
- What technology or home modifications would help me function better or be more independent in my home?
- What supports will I need to either continue living in my family home or move into my own place after graduation?
- How will I get around in the community as an adult (drive, public transit, family, cab, car service, etc)?



SAFETY & SECURITY

Staying safe and secure— emergencies, well-being, guardianship options, legal rights and issues

Parents and other supporters often worry their loved one with a disability will be taken advantage of or harmed if they don't have a guardian. You may have been told by your school, doctor, or friend that you need a guardian when you turn 18. However, it is important to understand how guardianship may affect your life, as well as the many options and alternatives that exist before making a decision.

- What skills and abilities can I learn and practice now to prepare me to “be my own person” so I will not need a guardian to keep me safe when I turn 18?
- What are some supported decision making practices that will keep me safe without restricting my basic rights?
- Which life areas concern my parents and loved ones most in terms of my safety?
- What are my parents and others doing to help me be able to stay at home or be in the community alone or without additional support?
- What am I doing to know what to do in case of an emergency or disaster?





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SOCIAL & SPIRITUALITY

Building friendships and relationships, leisure activities, personal networks, and faith community

Relationships and networks you build during the school years can play an important role in your adult life. These connections, sometimes referred to as “social capital,” may one day end up being your friends, neighbors, roommates, staff or employers. Most importantly, having friends and relationships is key to quality of life and happiness.

- What kinds of extracurricular activities at school or in the community (clubs, social outlets) could I participate in to help build friendships?
- How am I being supported or encouraged to start dating?
- Who is helping me learn about safe sex, intimacy and boundaries?
- What social media could I use safely and responsibly (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) to connect with and maintain contact with friends?
- What am I doing for fun that other people my age do?
- What opportunities do I have to be involved with a youth or young adult group in a faith community?



HEALTHY LIVING

Managing and accessing health care and staying well – medical, mental health, behavioral health, developmental, wellness and nutrition

Healthy living is an often overlooked, yet very important part of transition to adulthood. Steps you can take now will help you become more knowledgeable about your health, medical needs and disability, and start to take control of making decisions and choices about your own health. It is also time to think about who will provide your health care once you are an adult.

- What steps should I be taking to begin to take control of my own health care, including finding adult healthcare providers?
- How am I learning about the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise?
- Who is helping me understand the changes in my body and my reproductive health?
- What regular physical activities such as working out at the gym, using a treadmill or elliptical or doing aerobics, could replace some of my formal therapies?
- How am I learning to talk about my disability or healthcare needs with others?



ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT

Building valued roles, making choices, setting goals, assuming responsibility and driving how one's own life is lived

People learn responsibility and citizenship by having chores at home and participating in opportunities to give back to their community. During transition, it is important you find ways to be valued and a contributing member of society. You need opportunities for making choices, learning new skills, building community connections, increased responsibility, and communicating your wants and needs as you transition to adult life.

- How am I being supported to share my life vision (goals, hopes, dream) at educational and other support meetings?
- What steps are my parents and others taking to shift control of my life to me?
- How are family, teachers and others supporting me to make my own choices and decisions?
- How does my transition plan help me and others around me to focus more on what I CAN do rather than limitations of my disability?
- Who is helping me learn about policy issues and what I need to know to register and vote in elections?





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SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Resources and strategies to promote the development, education, interests, and personal well-being of a person and that enhances individual and family functioning

We all use a variety of sources to help us get through our daily lives. We rely on our own assets and capabilities. Most of us have people in our lives who do things for us (and vice versa). We tap into technology as well as businesses, organizations and resources in the community. Even though you might need support or access paid services, remember to consider your personal strengths and other supports that are available.

- Am I learning about the supports and benefits I receive or could receive; how to manage my money, services and supports; and lead my various planning meetings (IEP, IFSP, health, etc)?
- Should I/our family apply for benefits (Social Security, Medicaid, state DD services)? What are the pros and cons of each and how might it affect my future ability to earn income?
- What kinds of community (non-eligibility based) supports might help me now and as an adult (for example, public transportation)?
- Will I graduate/leave school at age 18 or continue until I am 21, and will I receive a high school diploma or a certificate of completion?



FAMILY UNIT

What the family unit needs to support and be a successful part of their family member's life. Supports that are directed to the family will ultimately benefit the individual

For many of us, family is a central part of our lives. We are connected to our families throughout the life course, even though the roles of our family members may change as we age. Our parents and family often have a key role in helping and guiding us as we grow into adults. What does your family need to help you on your journey to the good life? Here are some things to think about and discuss with your family:

- What supports does our family need in order to be able to continue working and maintain our lifestyle?
- How do you see your role as the parent/family member of an adult?
- How are we shifting control of my life to me as I become an adult?
- What are our hopes and dreams for our family's future?
- What future planning have we completed, such as a will, living trust, durable power of attorney for healthcare, and/or a special needs trust?

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