

Preparing Your Child for Adulthood

Planning for your child's transition from the school world to the adult world is one of the most important things you can do for your child. It helps guarantee success! Successful transitions happen when families, school and community come together to think about the future, plan ahead and work together. Here are some things to think about as you begin this process.

1. **Help build your child's self determination and self advocacy skills.** All young people should know the strengths, abilities and interests. Students with disabilities should know how their disability might affect work, community or further education.
2. **Help develop your child's social outlets.** Social relationships and recreation are not only fun, but help tie our children to the community and networks of support that are available.
3. **Expand your network and explore community agency options.** Who do you know in your family, social group, religious community, or volunteer experiences that may be helpful to your son or daughter? Is your child eligible for MRDD (mental retardation and developmental disabilities) services or BVR (Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation)? These agencies can provide case management and help for your child to live and work in the community.
4. **Make sure your son registers with Selective Service at age 18.** All males (including those with disabilities) must register within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Usually you receive notification via the mail or you may pick up forms at the post office. Failure to do so can affect a person's ability to receive federal and state benefits.
5. **Explore post-secondary (further education) accommodations.** There are no IEP's in college. Students must self disclose their disability and ask for accommodations. Colleges are required to provide reasonable accommodations but are not required to modify course work. Be sure and visit the Disability Services Office at the college you plan to attend.
6. **Investigate SSI programs.** Many people with disabilities are eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) that provides a monthly check that can help pay living expenses. Other programs (such as PASS) can help a student set aside income and resources to reach a work goal.
7. **Encourage your child to build a resume by volunteering.** Finding work experiences can help them compete in the job market.
8. **Help your child learn soft employment skills.** These include being able to accept direction, ask for help, deal with conflict and act appropriately in social situations. Some of these can be practiced at home.
9. **Plan for health care management.** Young adults with disabilities need to be knowledgeable about their health history. Check your medical insurance policies to make sure your child is still covered once they graduate.