

Texas Transition and Employment Guide

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This transition and employment guide is for you, the student in Texas public school, who may have received special education services due to a disability. It also provides helpful information for your parents. This guide has steps you and your parents can take to make sure you are able to find the right work or educational choices for you after high school. It also tells you where to get the services you will need after high school.

The guide is divided into sections on Self Advocacy, Transition Services, Employment and Supported Employment, Social Security Programs, Community and Long Term Services and Supports, Postsecondary Educational Programs and Services, Information Sharing, and Guardianship and Alternatives. Each section has phone numbers, emails, and websites to help you find what you need. At the end of each section and at the end of the guide, you will find a timeline of steps that you and your parents can take as you make the transition from student to adult. If you have questions about this guide or the information in it, please send us an email at sped@tea.state.tx.us.

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SELF-ADVOCACY, PERSON-DIRECTED PLANNING, AND SELF-DETERMINATION

INTRODUCTION

Transition is the term used for the time when you are changing from a student to an adult. You, your parents, others that know you well, and your school begin to plan for transition while you are still a student.

Your parents and the school need to understand your wants and needs to make sure they are included in your plan. You need to talk to your parents and your teachers about how you can become more involved in making decisions about your educational program and your plans for the future.

When you turn 18, the law considers you an adult who has the rights and responsibilities of every other adult. You can still ask your parents, or others that you know well for help to make important decisions, or voluntarily enter into a supported decision-making agreement with a supporter or helper to make important decisions. Before graduating from high school, you and your parents need to talk about many things. Some of these things are getting a job, going to college, and where to live. You can take a bigger part in making decisions for yourself by:

- Getting training on how to make decisions on your own behalf
- learning how to speak up for yourself
- learning how to set goals
- working on steps to reach your goals
- making choices as a young adult
- speaking up in your meetings
- helping to plan your future

This first section of the *Texas Transition and Employment Guide* talks about three ways for you to begin to plan for the future.

Self-Advocacy—Speaking for Yourself

Self-advocacy means speaking up for yourself. You should ask for what you need and want when making decisions about school, work or where you want to live.

Knowing yourself is your first step toward being a self-advocate. This means:

- talking about your needs, interests, likes, and dislikes
- knowing what you are good at and how you learn
- knowing what you want to do
- knowing what you have to do
- understanding your disability and how it affects your ability to work, learn, and live
- thinking about what you need to work, learn, and live
- learning your rights, responsibilities, and how to get help
- telling people what you need and want
- asking for help
- asking questions when you do not understand something
- speaking up in your admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee and other planning meetings
- helping to write your individualized education program (IEP)

Self Determination—Choosing for Yourself/Making Your Own Choices

Self-determination skills help you know yourself, your goals, and supports you need to reach your goals. You have the ability to learn and benefit from making your own choices.

Making your own choices means:

- making decisions on how a supporter or helper can help you
- taking responsibility for the decisions you make
- setting goals
- learning independent living, risk-taking, and safety skills
- believing in yourself and your abilities
- solving problems
- speaking up for yourself
- understanding what you know how to do and what you need to learn
- directing or leading your own life

Person-Directed Planning

You can begin to make your own choices about things that affect your life. Person-directed planning gives you the power to direct the supports and services that meet your needs. You and the people who know and care about you work together to make life choices.

Person-directed planning is a process that allows you and the legally authorized representative (LAR) on your side, to direct the development of a plan of supports and services that meets your personal outcomes. The process must:

- identify existing supports and services necessary to achieve your outcomes
- identify natural supports available to you and work out service system supports you will need
- occur with the support of a group of people chosen by you and the LAR on your side
- accommodate your style of communication and preferences regarding time and setting for the planning meeting

Supported Decision-Making

There is a new law requiring an agreement when an adult with a disability needs help when making decisions. You may voluntarily enter into a supported decision-making agreement with a supporter or helper. Supported decision-making is a process where you can ask another adult who you know and trust, for example a family member, friend, or a community member to help you understand the situations and choices you have to face.

Your supporter CANNOT make decisions for you. Your supporter CAN:

- Help you understand your choices and decisions
- Help you get and understand information to help you make your decisions
- Help you tell your decisions to other people
- With supported decision-making, you make your own choices with help. This lets you be more independent.

TIMELINE

When or before you turn 14:

- Ask for or get training on how to make decisions.
- Practice speaking up for yourself.
- Understand and explain your disability and what you may need to do to learn more.
- Talk about your interests, wants, and needs.

- Decide what you like to do, and what you are good at doing
- Participate in your ARD committee meeting.

When or before you turn 16:

- Ask if your transition plan includes training on how to make decisions, along with support and services that may help you while in high school and after high school.
- Talk about your goals for life after high school.
- Practice how to act in different places (school, jobs, and so on).
- Identify health care needs and providers (doctors, therapists, pharmacies) to meet your needs.

When or before you turn 18:

- Voluntarily enter into a supported decision-making agreement with a supporter, or helper if needed.
- Plan for working, voting, further education, and signing up for services.
- Decide where you want to live and how you will do it.
- Ask for help, say what you need, and tell people that you know how to make decisions.
- Be on time for classes, appointments, social activities, and work.
- Ask about other services like health, employment, counseling, technology, and housing that you can receive after high school.
- Accept responsibility for health care needs (make doctor or therapy appointments, fill and take your prescriptions, etc.).

After graduation:

- Take over making choices for your life.
- Find people who are willing to help you.
- Get help from a supporter or helper that you trust.
- Be open to trying positive new things.

WHO CAN HELP

- **Local School**

Your school district has a transition and employment designee (TED) to help you and your parents with information about being able to make life choices for yourself. You can find information about your school's TED at:

<http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18FWCountyInformation.aspx?ID=Transition>

- **Local Resources**

You and your parents need to look at what is available in your community. This could be local advocacy groups, offices of state agencies, or support groups.

- **Texas Transition Network Contacts – Transition in Texas -**

The transition specialist at your area's education service center (ESC) can give you and your parents information about planning for your future. A list of transition experts can be found at:

<http://www.transitionintexas.org/Page/7>

- **AskTED**

AskTED is an online list of Texas schools, including charters. Use this directory to find contact information for districts, schools, and education service centers:

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/districtinfo.aspx>

- **Texas School District Foster Care Liaison**
 Each school district/charter school in Texas has to have at least one person to help a student who is in foster care *enroll in* or *transfer* to a school. A list of the foster care advisers for your school can be found at:
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/FosterCareStudentSuccess/liasons/>
- **Transition Planning Guide for Students in Foster Care Receiving Special Education Services**
 This guide clarifies the similarities and differences in the transition planning processes in the child welfare and special education systems.
<https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539614471>
- **Disability Rights Texas**
 Disability Rights Texas is the federally designated legal protection and advocacy agency (P&A) for people with disabilities in Texas. You can contact the local office for help at:
<http://www.disabilityrightstx.org/>
- **Institute for Person-Centered Practices**
 The Institute for Person-Centered Practices helps you as a young adult learn how to take over your life as much as you can. It works with the Texas Center for Disability Studies at the University of Texas at Austin and the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University. For training and materials about person-centered practices, see:
<http://www.person-centered-practices.org/>
- **National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)**
 NTACT is a website for teachers and agencies to learn about helping students get ready for education and work.
- **Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD)**
 TCDD gives money to organizations to help people with developmental disabilities live on their own. For a description of projects supported by TCDD see:
<http://www.tcdd.texas.gov/>
 Find information about using respectful language at the following link:
<http://www.tcdd.texas.gov/resources/people-first-language/>
- **Department of Family and Protective Services/Child Protective Services (DFPS/CPS)**
 DFPS/CPS maintains a youth-focused website for services and referrals for youth and young people currently in foster care and those young people seeking transitional services from foster care to adulthood. In addition, DFPS, in collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission and the Casey Foundation, supports Transition Centers that provide an array of services, including education and vocational opportunities, employment readiness, housing, mentoring, and self-advocacy for youth and young people currently in foster care.
 See more information at:
https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/default.asp
- **Texas Project First, a project of the Texas Education Agency by and for families**
 Texas Project First (Family to Family) provides information and resources for educators, school districts, parents, students, and the general public, including information on:

 - Self-Determination
 - Person Centered Planning
 - Guardianship
 - Self-Advocacywww.texasprojectfirst.org

- The Arc of Texas**

The Arc of Texas can tell you how to find training and services to teach you and your family how to advocate for yourself. Learn about Project MOVE advocacy training and support at the following link:
http://www.thearcoftexas.org/site/PageServer?pagename=advocacy_index
- Partners Resource Network**

Partners Resource Network (PRN) is a non-profit agency that operates the Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) in all areas of the state. Texas PTIs provide training, education, information, referral, emotional support, and individual help to get services. Get more information at:
www.prntexas.org
Toll-free number: 800-866-4726
- Texas Parent to Parent (TxP2P)**

TxP2P provides peer support and information to families of children with special needs and/or disabilities. For detailed transition information see this link:
<http://www.txp2p.org/parents/pathway.html> or call 866-896-6001
(email cynda.green@txp2p.org).

TxP2P also provides an on-line resource directory organized by counties. Just enter or select your county or a nearby county to see what resources are available for you or your family at:
<http://www.txp2p.org/training/family2family.html>
- Texas Advocates**

Texas Advocates provides training to its members on self-advocacy, self-determination, person-directed planning, and self-advocacy organizations at the following link:
<http://www.txadvocates.org>

Please send additional thoughts and comments to sped@tea.state.tx.us

TRANSITION SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Preparing for the future is a part of everyone's education. You, your parents, others that know you well, and your school work together to build a roadmap to your future after you complete high school. Developing this roadmap is called **transition planning**. You and your future are the focus of transition planning. Your interests, wants, and needs are considered in creating the plan for your life.

Transition planning helps you find out about your:

- ability to learn to make choices
- interests
- skills and abilities
- skill development areas to be completed during high school in order to meet post high school goals
- transition needs, including independent living needs
- career goals
- education choices for after high school graduation

Both the United States (Federal) and Texas have laws for transition planning. The timelines for starting transition planning are different under the two laws. This section has information about the laws that apply to transition planning.

In Texas, your admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee must have a transition discussion by your 14th birthday. Transition planning may begin even earlier if your ARD committee decides it is right for you. By age 16, your ARD committee must write goals for your life after high school. This is your transition plan. These goals are based on any further training or education you will need, work you want to do, and independent living skills you will need after you graduate. It is important for you to take an active role in setting the goals. You and your parents must be invited to all ARD committee meetings, and it is important for you to attend and participate in the ARD committee meetings when transition is discussed.

US (Federal) Requirements:

34 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) §300.43 Transition services

Transition services are activities that are designed just for you that:

- Help you move from the activities you do in school to activities you want to do after high school, such as:
 - education or vocational training after graduation
 - jobs and work (including supported employment)
 - continuing and adult education (non-credit courses, work development programs customized training)
 - services you may need as an adult
 - living on your own
 - things to do in your community

- Are based on your needs and on your strengths, preferences, and interests. Transition services may include:
 - instruction (what is taught in school)
 - related services (occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, and transportation, if needed)
 - community experiences
 - employment or post-school adult living objectives
 - learning independent living skills
 - having a functional vocational evaluation

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA is a new law to improve access to education and workforce services for individuals with significant barriers to employment. This includes veterans, individuals with disabilities, out-of-school and at-risk youth, and other populations to help ensure that everyone has an opportunity to get a good job.

Recent amendments to the *Rehabilitation Act* authorize the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency, along with your school, to provide or arrange for the early provision of pre-employment services for all students with disabilities who are eligible, or potentially eligible, for VR services.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) - 5 Required Activity Areas:

- **Career Exploration** - counseling and guidance to help you look at different career areas, what those careers require, what someone doing that job does day-to-day, interest inventories, and other simple assessments to get a sense of what is a good career fit for you
- **Work-based learning** – helps you explore careers in real work settings
- **Counseling on post-secondary opportunities** - counseling and guidance for you on what post-secondary programs are available, what each requires, cost, and help with understanding financial aid, registration, and accessing accommodations
- **Job Readiness Training, including social skills training**- any training/information that helps you acquire a skill related to work. For example, soft skills, social skills, transportation, resume writing, interviewing
- **Self-Advocacy** - any specific training/information that helps you gain self-advocacy skills

CFR §300.320 Definition of individualized education program [Excerpt]

Transition services must begin by the time you turn 16, or younger if the ARD committee decides it is appropriate. This must be done every year.

Your IEP must include -

- appropriate measurable goals for after high school that are based on age appropriate transition assessments for training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills
- the transition services (including courses of study) needed to help you reach those goals

Transfer of Rights at Age of Majority

Beginning no later than one year before you reach the age of majority under State law (18), your IEP must include a statement that you have been informed of your rights, if any, that will transfer to you when you reach the age of majority.

Transition Programs for Students Aged 19-22

If you have graduated by completing your IEP, or if you have not yet graduated but have not had your 22nd birthday, you could be eligible for continuing special education, vocational, and transition services through your local district. Please contact your school district's transition and employment designee (TED) for information. You can find information about your school's TED at: <http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18FWCountyInformation.aspx?ID=Transition>

CFR §300.321 IEP Team

- The school must invite you to attend your ARD meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be to consider goals for after high school and the transition services needed to help you reach those goals.
- If you do not attend the ARD meeting, the school must take other steps to make sure that your preferences and interests are considered.
- To the extent appropriate, with the consent of your parents or yourself if you have reached the age of majority (18), the school must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services to the ARD meeting.

Texas State Requirements:

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) § 89.1055. Content of the Individualized Education

Program (IEP) [Excerpt]

By age 14, your ARD committee must consider and, if appropriate, address any of these that are right for you:

- how involved you will be in your transition to life after high school
- if you are younger than 18, how your parents will be involved in your transition planning
- if you are least 18, how your parents or others that you know and trust will be involved in your transition if they are invited to participate in your ARD committee meeting
- any post-school education preparation and choices
- if you need a functional vocational evaluation
- work goals and objectives
- educational preparation and choices available for you once you turn 18 to get ready for college, training, work, or independent living
- learning independent living skills
- connecting you and your parents to agencies and services, and if needed, assisting with a referral to an agency to place you on a waitlist such as a waiver program
- training to make decisions on your own behalf to help you prepare for adulthood so you have the option of a supported decision-maker or helper, if needed.

Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.0111. Beginning of Transition Planning

By the time you are 14, state transition planning must begin.

TIMELINE

When or before you turn 14:

- Ask for or get training on how to make decisions for yourself
- Talk to your parents and teachers before attending ARD committee meetings
- Explain your interests, needs, and strengths.
- Participate in the ARD committee meeting discussions about transition services.

- Speak up about what you need at school.
- Speak up about what you want to happen after high school.
- Make sure you get information about all choices during ARD committee meetings.
- Learn about agencies outside of school who might provide you with any services.

Parents: If your child is identified with a developmental disability, put his or her name on an interest list until services are available, you can find more information about the interest list here <https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/records-statistics/interest-list-reduction>. Please know that it may take years.

When or before you turn 16:

- Ask if your transition plan includes training on how to make decisions, along with support and services that may help you while in high school and after high school.
- Check your transition plan at least once a year until you graduate from high school.
- Write goals for after you graduate from high school.
- Give permission to share information with people you know and trust outside of school who might help you with transition services.

When or before you turn 18:

- When you turn 17, you should ask for and receive notice about what rights you will have when you become an adult.
- Ask for and receive your adult rights. Your parents will continue to get notice of your ARD committee meetings, but can only attend the meetings if you or the school invites them.
- Voluntarily enter into a supported decision-making agreement with a supporter, or helper if needed.
- Give permission to share information with people you know and trust outside of school.
- Give permission to parents or others you know well and trust to participate in a supported decision making agreement.

After graduation:

- Get a written list of what you have done in high school (diploma, transcripts, summary of performance, etc.).
- Ask for and receive notice that your high school education is completed.

WHO CAN HELP

• **Local School**

Your school district has a transition and employment designee (TED) to help you and your parents with information about transition services. You can find information about your school's TED at:

<http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18FWCountyInformation.aspx?ID=Transition>

• **Local Resources**

You and your parents need to look at what is available in your community. This could be local advocacy groups, offices of state agencies, or support groups.

• **Texas Transition Network Contacts – Transition in Texas**

The transition specialist at your area's education service center (ESC) can give you and your parents information about planning for your future. A list of transition specialists can be found at:

<http://www.transitionintexas.org/Page/7>

- **Texas Special Education Information Center (SPEDTex)**
 Provides information and resources to stakeholders across the state of Texas. Specialists are available by phone at 1-855-SPED-TEX (1-855-773-3839) or email at inquire@spedtex.org
www.spedtex.org
- **AskTED**
 AskTED is an online list of Texas schools, including charters. Use this directory to find contact information for districts, schools, and education service centers.
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/districtinfo.aspx>
- **Texas Oncourse**
 Texas Oncourse is an online website that has college and career resource information to help you plan for college and work.
<https://texasoncourse.org/about/>
- **Texas CTE Resource Center**
 Texas CTE is an online website that gives you information on different career choices.
<https://www.txcte.org/teachers>
- **Texas School District Foster Care Liaison**
 Each school district/charter school in Texas has to have at least one person to help a student who is in foster care enroll in or transfer to a school. A list showing the foster care liaison for your school is posted at:
[http://www.tea.state.tx.us/FosterCareStudentSuccess/liaisons/Transition Planning Guide for Students in Foster Care Receiving Special Education Services](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/FosterCareStudentSuccess/liaisons/TransitionPlanningGuideforStudentsinFosterCareReceivingSpecialEducationServices)
- **Transition Planning Guide for Students in Foster Care Receiving Special Education Services**
 This guide clarifies the similarities and differences in the transition planning processes in the child welfare and special education systems.
<https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539614471>
- **Department of Family and Protective Services/Child Protective Services (DFPS/CPS)**
 DFPS/CPS maintains a youth-focused website for services and referrals for youth and young people currently in foster care and those young people seeking transitional services from foster care to adulthood. In addition, DFPS, in collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission and the Casey Foundation, supports Transition Centers that provide an array of services, including education and vocational opportunities, employment readiness, housing, mentoring, and self-advocacy for youth and young people currently in foster care. More information is available at:
<https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>
- **DFPS Transition Living Services**
 Transition Living Services lists many programs, information, and resources about transition for foster youth and alumni ages 14-23 years. More information can be found at:
https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/default.asp
- **Navigate Life Texas**
 This website is especially for families and parents of children with disabilities or special health-care needs. It is designed to offer support, inspiration, resources, and links to services available.
<https://www.navigatelifetexas.org/en>

- **Partners Resource Network**

Partners Resource Network (PRN) is a non-profit agency that operates the Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) in all areas of the state. Texas PTIs provide training, education, information, referral, emotional support, and individual help to get services. Get more information at:

www.prntexas.org

Toll-free number: 800-866-4726

- **Preparation for Adult Living (PAL)**

The PAL program prepares the foster youth for the inevitable departure from the care of DFPS. The foster youth are provided skills and resources they will need to be healthy, productive, and independent adults. More information can be found at:

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Preparation_For_Adult_Living/default.asp

- **Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Services Program**

Medical assistance programs and promotes family-centered, community-based, culturally competent, coordinated health care, and family support services.

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/cshcn/default.shtm>

- **Texas Parent to Parent (TxP2P)**

TxP2P provides peer support and information to families of children with special needs and/or disabilities. For detailed transition information see this link:

<https://www.txp2p.org/> or call 1-866-896-6001 (email cynda.green@txp2p.org)

TxP2P also provides an on-line Resource Directory organized by counties. Just enter or select your county or a surrounding county to see what resources are available for you or your family at:

<http://www.txp2p.org/training/family2family.html>

- **Transition Centers**

These centers help connect foster youth with services, including educational support, food, housing, employment, health care, counseling and more. More information can be found at:

<https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/resources/local/>

Please send additional thoughts and comments to sped@tea.state.tx.us

EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) -TWC has services that help you find and keep good jobs. TWC helps employers hire skilled workers they need to grow their businesses. Workforce partners include community colleges, adult basic education providers, local school districts, economic development groups, businesses, and other state agencies. TWC offices have the following employment services:

- registration with WorkInTexas.com--TWC's online job matching system
- referrals to job listings
- information about high demand jobs in your areas (labor market)
- evaluation/assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities
- referral to support services you may need in order to work
- help with résumé and application preparation
- training programs

Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services- The main purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program through Texas Workforce Commission is to help Texans with disabilities, which meet eligibility requirements, prepare for, find, keep, and advance in jobs through provided services. The VR program has no waiting list.

Historically, VR services have been provided through two divisions, the Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the Division for Blind Services (DBS). However, as mandated by SB208 of the 84th legislature, the divisions have combined as of October 1, 2017.

Transition services must be

- provided to eligible, or potentially eligible, students with disabilities receiving VR services
- provided through referrals received from the schools, other community organizations, or the individual
- supported through a VR transition counselor assigned
- based on individual need
- reasonable and necessary to support the vocational goal

Transition services, which are a part of VR services, start with consideration of the following:

- Career Exploration
- Work-based learning
- Counseling on the opportunity for post-secondary training
- Job Readiness, including social and independent living skills, and
- Self-Advocacy

Most schools have a VR counselor assigned. If you are unsure who your school's counselor is, please ask your teacher, transition and employment services designee, counselor, or principal, or contact your local TWC office.

The need for VR services is evaluated and planned for around the following six areas:

- adjustment to vision loss/blindness
- independent living skills
- travel skills
- communication skills (Including Braille and the use of assistive technology)
- development of support systems
- development of vocational skills

Transition Services serve students/young adults who are at least 14 years of age, but under 24. DBS may also provide:

- orientation and mobility training
- low vision services and eyewear

Typical VR services may include, but are not limited to:

- vocational assessment
- counseling and guidance
- job coaching or supported employment
- supported self-employment
- assistance with academic or vocational training
- individual counseling
- independent living skills training
- assistive technology
- career guidance
- work and career exploration activities and training
- mentoring, educational support in the individualized education program (IEP) process
- rehabilitation treatment center services
- services related to post-secondary training
- orientation and mobility training
- low vision services and eyewear

TIMELINE

When or before you turn 14:

- Talk with your parents and teachers about what kind of job you want.
- Understand the Texas graduation programs.
- Work with your school and parents to make sure that you take the classes you need for the job you want.
- Complete interest and career inventories.
- Talk about your career interests and skills or any jobs that you have already had.
- Find out about career options.
- Ask about developing a graduation plan.
- Talk about your needs for assistive technology when working.
- Request a functional vocational assessment if you need it.

When you are 14-16:

- Find out about education or training requirements for a job that you want.
- Talk with your ARD committee to write your work goals for after graduation.
- Review classes that you need for your job interest, including career and technical education programs.
- Learn how to apply for a job.
- Learn how to interview for a job and practice.
- Talk about supports you will need to get and keep a job.
- Learn about any agencies that might help you with training and getting a job, and invite those agencies to your ARD committee meetings.
- Find out what you will need to help you get to a job, including taking the bus or the train.
- Keep a list of your job experiences or volunteer work or clubs, sports, and activities.
- Begin a résumé and update, as needed.
- Complete a functional vocational assessment if you need it.

When or before you turn 18:

- Participate in your ARD committee meeting to review and update your work goals.
- Contact agencies that might help you with training and getting a job.
- Invite any people from agencies that might help you with training/getting a job to your ARD committee meeting.
- Work with your transition and employment designee (TED) to develop your Summary of Performance.
- Find sources for job listings.
- Learn about the cost for job training and additional education.
- Develop a list of references.
- Finalize your résumé.
- Apply for jobs.

After graduation:

- Connect to agencies if you have not done so and if you need to.

WHO CAN HELP

- **Local School District/School**

Your school district has a transition and employment designee (TED) to help you and your parents with information about employment or supported employment. You can find information about your school's TED at:

<http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18FWCountyInformation.aspx?ID=Transition>

- **Local Resources**

You and your parents may find information about jobs and training programs in your town or neighborhood. This may include local offices of state agencies or support groups.

- **The Health and Human Services “Employment Guide for People with Disabilities.”**

The purpose of this guide is to provide information on how to support and help people with disabilities who are receiving HHS services and are of working age to get and keep competitive, integrated employment.

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/employment/employment-first/employment-guide-people-disabilities>

- **Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services-**

The main purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program through Texas Workforce Commission is to help Texans with disabilities, which meet eligibility requirements, prepare for, find, keep, and advance in jobs through provided services. The VR program has no waiting list.

- **Texas Workforce Commission (online resources)**

- o **Disability Discrimination** - Find information on employment discrimination, complaint resolution procedures, deadlines, and more.

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/crd/disability-discrimination.html>

- o **mySkills myFuture** – Explore career options based on skills you may have used in previous jobs. Compare careers, find trainings, and search for jobs.

<http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org/>

- o **Reality Check** - Estimate how much money you may need for housing, utilities, transportation, clothes, health care, entertainment, and other expenses.

<http://www.texasrealitycheck.com/>

- o **Texas CARES** - Explore interests and work values. Find information such as the fastest growing jobs, levels of education and training requirements, and average salaries.
<http://www.texascaresonline.com/wowmenu.asp>
 - o **Texas Work Prep** - Learn about getting and keeping the job of your choice.
<https://www.texasworkprep.com/>
 - o **Workforce Solutions Offices** - Find job placement services, job postings, job search resources, and training programs. Explore career options, résumé and application preparation, career development, and more.
<https://www.texasworkprep.com/texasworkprep.htm>
 - o **WorkInTexas.com** - Search for jobs, create a résumé, and submit applications for employment.
WorkInTexas.com
- **Texas Workforce Commission- Vocational Rehabilitation Division** www.twc.state.tx.us
Statewide Transition Specialist: Erin Wilder (512)936-3707 or erin.wilder@twc.state.tx.us or Kevin Markel (817) 759-3514 kevin.markel@twc.state.tx.us
 - **Centers for Independent Living (CILs)**
The independent living service delivery system in Texas is composed of twenty-seven CILs, and independent living programs of the Divisions for Rehabilitation and Blind Services.
<http://www.txsilc.org/index.php/en/centers.html>.
 - **Department of Family and Protective Services/Child Protective Services (DFPS/CPS)**
DFPS/CPS maintains a youth-focused website for services and referrals for youth and young people currently in foster care and those young people seeking transitional services from foster care to adulthood. In addition, DFPS, in collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission and the Casey Foundation Support Transition Centers that provide an array of services, including education and vocational opportunities, employment readiness, housing, mentoring, and self-advocacy for youth and young people currently in foster care.
https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/hot_stuff/default.asp
 - **Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI)**
TSBVI serves as a special public school for students, aged 6 through 21, who are blind, deafblind, or visually impaired.
<http://tsbvi.edu/>
 - **Texas School for the Deaf (TSD)**
TSD is a state agency whose purpose is to provide a continuum of direct educational services to students, aged birth through 21, who are deaf or hard of hearing and who may have multiple disabilities.
<http://www.tsd.state.tx.us/>

Please send additional thoughts and comments to sped@tea.state.tx.us

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

To get a job in the United States you need a social security number or a work permit. The Social Security Administration (SSA) is a federal agency that is responsible for issuing Social Security cards and operating the Title II retirement, survivor and disability insurance programs as well as Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The transition planning process is a way to focus on how work incentives can help you and your family plan a future that includes employment. You can find your local Social Security office by going to <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>.

WHAT'S THE TRUTH ABOUT WORKING AND THE SSA DISABILITY PROGRAMS?

All SSA disability programs are meant to be a bridge for people with disabilities to gain financial independence, not lifetime programs. Some people may need to stay on benefits for a long time before giving them up entirely, and some people may need them for a longer period of time.

There are many myths about working while trying to get on benefits, or what happens to the cash benefit and health insurance when you work. An important point to know is that individuals can work, earn a living wage, and continue to receive SSI or Title II disability benefits without losing monthly cash benefit or health insurance for a long time.

SSA's disability programs are difficult to understand! If you receive SSI or Title II benefits, the correct information can make it easier to understand. At the end of this section are a list of organizations that can help you understand and use the SSA disability programs.

THERE ARE FOUR SSA DISABILITY BENEFIT PROGRAMS

SSA is responsible for four disability benefits programs. All programs provide a monthly cash benefit and/or health insurance through Medicaid or Medicare. The four types of programs are:

1. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) which pays monthly benefits to people with limited income and resources because of old age, blindness, or disability.
Title II includes three programs for people with disabilities. Each of the Title II benefits come from you or a family member's work record:
2. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
3. Childhood Disability Beneficiaries (also known as Disabled Adult Child) and
4. Disabled Widow/Widowers.

Individuals under age 18 with or without a disability may receive a cash benefit (but no health insurance) from Social Security through a parent's work record. If you are under 18, you may receive Childhood SSI and Medicaid due to a disability.

When you 18, and you are receiving Childhood SSI (those under age 18), your benefits will be re-determined under SSA Adult Disability guidelines. Individuals who receive SSI as a child (under age 18) do not always qualify for SSI as an adult.

The SSA offers special work incentives that allow you to work and still receive cash and/or health care benefits (Medicaid and/or Medicare) that you qualify for. This section has information about social security services, programs, and resources to help you with benefits and services.

Contact your local SSA office for information on applying for one of the four disability benefits programs. You can find your local office by going to <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>.

BASICS OF SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)

- SSI is a program for individuals who cannot afford to get food and shelter without some cash assistance from SSA. You must have a low amount of “resources” or “assets”. In other words, you cannot have any other money you could use to get food and shelter other than \$2,000 each month in savings.
- Individuals who receive SSI get a monthly cash benefit of up to \$750 a month in 2018 and Medicaid health insurance.
- Your monthly cash benefit can be reduced:
 - if someone else pays for your room and board
 - if you live with someone such as a parent or spouse who are legally responsible for assisting you with room and board
 - if someone gives you cash each month
 - if you are working and earning an income
- How much you receive each month is based on a standard math formula. The most important thing to know about the SSI formula is that even if you work and the amount of income you earn causes your SSI cash benefit to go to \$0 a month, you are still an active SSI recipient. The best news is that if you receive SSI you will always have a lot more money when you work and you will still be able to keep free Medicaid health insurance!
- The numbers in this manual can change each January 1st. You must know what the “new numbers” are to estimate cash benefits, so be sure to go to <https://www.ssa.gov/> on January 1 each year to get updated information about disability benefit programs!
- Here is what the SSI formula looks like:

STEPS	CALCULATIONS
Unearned Income	
General Income Exclusion (GIE)	-
TOTAL COUNTABLE UNEARNED INCOME	=
 	
Gross Earned Income	
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-
Remainder	
GIE (if not used above)	-
Remainder	
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE)	-
Remainder	
Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)	-
Remainder	
Divide by 2	
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-
TOTAL COUNTABLE EARNED INCOME	=
 	
Total Countable Unearned Income	
Total Countable Earned Income	+
PASS Deduction	-
TOTAL COUNTABLE INCOME	=
 	
Base SSI Rate	
Total Countable Income	-
ADJUSTED SSI PAYMENT	=

The following are examples of how each SSA work incentive program can help you receive SSI and work!

WORK INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME:

STUDENT EARNED INCOME EXCLUSION (SEIE): Students under 22 and regularly attending school can deduct \$1,820 per month up to \$7,350 in calendar year 2018 of earned income per year.

Here is an example of an SEIE. Jane earns \$8.00 an hour and works 32 hours per week. SSA would estimate Jane’s monthly gross income (that is, before taxes are taken out) at \$1,108 a month.

STEPS	CALCULATIONS
Unearned Income	100 from mom each month
General Income Exclusion (GIE)	- 20
TOTAL COUNTABLE UNEARNED INCOME	= 80
<hr/>	
Gross Earned Income	1,108
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-1,108
Remainder	0
GIE (if not used above)	-0
Remainder	0
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE)	-0
Remainder	0
Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)	-0
Remainder	0
Divide by 2	0
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-0
TOTAL COUNTABLE EARNED INCOME	=0
<hr/>	
Total Countable Unearned Income	80
Total Countable Earned Income	+0
PASS Deduction	-0
TOTAL COUNTABLE INCOME	=80
<hr/>	
Base SSI Rate	750
Total Countable Income	-80
ADJUSTED SSI PAYMENT	= \$670

Without the SEIE, Jane’s adjusted monthly SSI cash benefit when she is working would be \$148.50. with the SEIE it is \$670.

Before going to work Jane had \$850 a month with her mom’s cash gift of \$100 and her SSI of \$750. When Jane goes to work, she has \$1,878. Even with taxes taken out of Jane’s earnings she would have approximately \$1,581 cash in her pocket at the end of the month!

- Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE): Items or services necessary for work and related to disability. Some examples of an IRWE are paratransit services to get to and from work, job coaches and co-pays on medications. Up to one-half the total cost of the item or service will not be counted in the SSI formula.

Let’s look at Jane again, but this time she only has an IRWE, no SEIE. She still earns \$8.00 an hour and works 32 hours per week with SSA estimating her monthly gross income (that is, before taxes are taken out) at \$1,108 a month. Jane pays her mom to drive her to and from work because Jane cannot drive due to her disability. SSA values this driver service at \$135 a month.

Here is how Jane's IRWE would look:

STEPS	CALCULATIONS
Unearned Income	100 from mom each month
General Income Exclusion (GIE)	-20
TOTAL COUNTABLE UNEARNED INCOME	= 80
<hr/>	
Gross Earned Income	1,108
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-0
Remainder	1108
GIE (if not used above)	-0
Remainder	1108
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE)	-65
Remainder	1043
Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)	-135
Remainder	908
Divide by 2	454
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-0
TOTAL COUNTABLE EARNED INCOME	=454
<hr/>	
Total Countable Unearned Income	80
Total Countable Earned Income	+454
PASS Deduction	-0
TOTAL COUNTABLE INCOME	=534
<hr/>	
Base SSI Rate	750
Total Countable Income	-534
ADJUSTED SSI PAYMENT	= \$216

Without the IRWE Jane's adjusted monthly SSI cash benefit would be \$148.50

Before going to work Jane had \$850 a month with her mom's cash gift of \$100 and her SSI of \$750. When Jane goes to work, she has \$1,404. Even with taxes taken out of Jane's earnings she would have approximately \$1,127 cash in her pocket at the end of the month!

- Blind Work Incentives (BWE): Only for those determined statutorily Blind by SSA. BWEs, like IRWEs are, Items or services needed to work but unlike IRWEs a BWE include most work-related expenses even if not related to the statutorily Blindness. Examples of BWEs include state and federal taxes taken out of the paycheck, cost of service animal, all meals consumed at work, any type of transportation, adaptive equipment and much, much more.

Jane is now statutorily Blind by SSA's definition. She still earns an estimated \$1,108 a month and her mom still gives her \$100 in cash each month. With all her work-related expenses, including the driver services provided by her mother she has a total of \$455 each month in BWEs. Here's how her SSI looks using the BWE:

STEPS	CALCULATIONS
Unearned Income	100 from mom each month
General Income Exclusion (GIE)	-20
2018 TOTAL COUNTABLE UNEARNED INCOME	= 80
 	
Gross Earned Income	1,108
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-0
Remainder	1108
GIE (if not used above)	-0
Remainder	1108
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE)	-65
Remainder	1043
Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)	-0
Remainder	1043
Divide by 2	521.50
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-455
TOTAL COUNTABLE EARNED INCOME	=66.50
 	
Total Countable Unearned Income	80
Total Countable Earned Income	+66.50
PASS Deduction	-0
TOTAL COUNTABLE INCOME	=146.50
 	
Base SSI Rate	750
Total Countable Income	-146.50
ADJUSTED SSI PAYMENT	= \$603.50

Without the BWE Jane's adjusted monthly SSI cash benefit would be \$148.50

Before going to work Jane had \$850 a month with her mom's cash gift of \$100 and her SSI of \$750. When Jane goes to work, she has \$1,791.50. Even with taxes taken out of Jane's earnings she would have approximately \$1,514.50 cash in her pocket at the end of the month.

- Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS): An individual does not have to be working to have a PASS, but could be working. SSA ignores any money put into a PASS Plan. However, you must have unearned income such as a Title II cash benefit, or cash gifts to put into the PASS. You cannot put any of your SSI cash benefit into a PASS.

Jane is now going to use a PASS. She still earns \$1,108 and mom still gives her \$100 a month. Jane decides she wants to go to college and will use the PASS to save for books. She is going to put the \$100 her mom gives her each month into her PASS.

STEPS	CALCULATIONS
Unearned Income	100 from mom each month
General Income Exclusion (GIE)	-20
TOTAL COUNTABLE UNEARNED INCOME	= 80
 	
Gross Earned Income	1,108
Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)	-0
Remainder	1108
GIE (if not used above)	-0
Remainder	1108
Earned Income Exclusion (EIE)	-65
Remainder	1043
Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)	-0
Remainder	1043
Divide by 2	521.50
Blind Work Expenses (BWE)	-0
TOTAL COUNTABLE EARNED INCOME	=521.50
 	
Total Countable Unearned Income	80
Total Countable Earned Income	+521.50
PASS Deduction	-100
TOTAL COUNTABLE INCOME	=501.50
 	
Base SSI Rate	735
Total Countable Income	-501.50
ADJUSTED SSI PAYMENT	= \$233.50

When Jane uses the PASS the \$100 her mom gives her each month will NOT be counted when SSA figures out her adjusted monthly cash benefit! Without the PASS her adjusted SSI cash benefit would have been \$148.50.

- 1619 (b): Allows SSI beneficiaries to keep Medicaid until a yearly gross income of \$34,821(2017; 2018 amount is not released until the first of the year or after) or higher with an individualized threshold. 1619(b) is automatic, no paperwork or application needed. 1619 (b) will kick in when you reach the “break-even point” which is the point at which your earnings from a job cause your monthly cash benefit to go to \$0 a month. In 2018 that amount will be \$1,585 gross earned income a month. You are still an active SSI recipient and still receive free Medicaid. And, instead of having \$750 a month (in SSI cash benefit) you will have over \$2,900 a month!

- Expedited Reinstatement: If ineligible for SSI and/or Medicaid for any reason other than medical recovery or work, may be able to restart the SSI cash payment and/or Medicaid coverage within 12 months without a new application. If cash payment and Medicaid benefits ended because of work and earnings and work stops within 5 years of when benefits ceased, SSA may be able to start benefits up again.

BASICS OF TITLE II (Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Childhood Disability Beneficiary, also known as Disabled Adult Child (CDB/DAC), and Disabled Widow/Widower (DWB).

- Title II is an insurance system. You pay into the national trust fund and if you get a disability or your disability worsens you may be able to get a monthly cash benefit and Medicare off of your work record.

- You could also have a disability and be related to somebody (child, spouse, former spouse, parent) who is disabled, retired or deceased with work history. In these cases, you may be able to get a monthly cash benefit and/or Medicare from your family member's work record.
- Monthly cash benefit amount will vary depending on when relevant work income earned and the amount earned.
- No assets (resources) or unearned income matters.
- When you receive Title II and work, you will either get your full monthly cash benefit or get no cash benefit at all depending on which of the five Title II stages of work you are in and how much you are earning.
- Customers on Title II have to know the stages of work well and understand how to use each one of them to come out ahead financially when working.

TITLE II WORK INCENTIVE PROGRAMS:

- Trial Work Period (TWP): Nine months is defined as a rolling sixty-month period. In 2018, a TWP month is triggered by gross monthly earnings of \$850 with no deductions. You can make any amount of money and be eligible to receive a check.
- Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE): 36-month period immediately following completion of TWP. (except for Grace Period, get a check or don't get a check based on earning above or below Substantial Gainful Activity).
- Grace Period: Triggered the first time an individual earns above Substantial Gainful Activity after the Trial Work Period. It can occur during the EPE or after. This would allow for 3 more checks even if earnings are above SGA.
- Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits: Allows individual to fill out one-page application to be restored to benefits immediately for 6 months while SSA reviews the disability for medical improvement. This period begins after termination and lasts for 5 years.
- Substantial Gainful Activity: \$1,180 non-blind/\$1,970 blind (2018). This number represents the amount in countable income that will trigger either a cessation (check stops during EPE) or termination (check stops after EPE and/or a new application needed to restore benefits).
- Subsidy/Special Condition: Support provided by employer or other that demonstrates that the individual is not earning the actual wages that are being paid.
- Impairment Related Work Expense: Must be necessary for work and related to disability.
- Extended Medicare: Medicare continues for at least 93 months after Trial Work Period ends.

SSA'S TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM

Everyone receiving SSI or a Title II Disability benefit can utilize the Ticket to Work (TTW) Program.

TTW allows you to choose a private Employment Network (EN) or go to a state Vocational Rehabilitation office if you would like assistance finding a job.

TTW will exempt those making SSA Timely Progress from Continuing Medical Disability Reviews while their "Ticket" is in use.

To find out more about TTW go to <https://www.choosework.net/>

TIMELINE

SSI and the Title II Disability programs each has their own set of rules for eligibility and timelines for services. For more information about social security programs, apply for benefits, and find disability facts go to <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices/>

Or call SSA at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778)

When or before you turn 14:

- Apply for a social security number/card.
- Contact the local social security office to see if you qualify for benefits.

When or before your turn 16:

- Find out how paid employment affects SSI and Medicaid benefits. Explore work incentives and how they may help you reach your goals.

When or before you turn 18:

- Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Explore work incentives and how they may help you reach your goals.

After graduation:

- Find out how to report money that you earn to your local SSA office.

WHO CAN HELP

There are several ways to get information about benefits from the SSA.

• **Community Work Incentive Coordinator**

SSA has contracted with private agencies throughout the country to run Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Programs (WIPA). SSA Certified Benefits Counselors, known as Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWIC) will provide you with free detailed information about their disability and work incentive programs.

Find your CWIC at <https://www.choosework.net/>

• **Disability Rights Texas**

Disability Rights Texas has the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) program. <http://www.disabilityrightstx.org/>. PABSS staff can provide you with more detailed information about SSA's work incentive programs and assist with any issues that arise when you are working with a TTW EN.

• **SSA's Ticket to Work Helpline:**

1-866-968-7842 (voice) or 1-866-833-2967 (TDD). Operators who are trained in the SSA work incentive programs can give you general information about those programs and can provide referral to a CWIC in your area.

• **Local School**

Your school district has a transition and employment designee (TED) to help you and your parents with information about social security programs. You can find information about your school's TED at:

<http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18FWCountyInformation.aspx?ID=Transition>

- **Local Resources**

You and your parents may find information about social security in your community. This may include local offices of state agencies or support groups.

- **Centers for Independent Living (CILs)**

The independent living service delivery system in Texas is composed of twenty-seven CILs, and independent living programs of the Divisions for Rehabilitation and Blind Services.

<http://www.txsilc.org/index.php/en/centers.html>. Not all CILS will have a staff knowledgeable about SSA benefits and work incentives, so be sure to ask if they have a staff certified by SSA before speaking with them about SSA benefits.

Please send additional thoughts and comments to sped@tea.state.tx.us

COMMUNITY AND LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

INTRODUCTION

When you transition from high school to adulthood, you may need services and supports from the community to help you live as independently as possible. There are state and local community agencies and resources available to help you. You must qualify for these services and you are not guaranteed long-term services and supports. There are more people who want services than there are services available.

Many services are available through waiver programs. Contact the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and find out about the different waiver programs. You will want to get on the interest list as soon as possible while you are still in school. The wait time for some of these services is ten or more years. Be sure to check back regularly to find out what your wait time is. Let HHSC know if your address changes to keep your information up to date.

The state or local agency will help you determine what services and supports you may need. The state or local agency may also refer you to other agencies or programs. This section has information about community and long-term services, supports, and resources to help you with living as independently as possible. Always remember that it is okay to ask questions about transitioning from high school to adulthood.

You can find supports for:

- attendant care - help in daily living activities for a person with a disability
- transportation - help with transportation needs for a person with a disability
- supported living choices - living where and with whom you want with supports
- group home - a home where a number of unrelated people in need of care, support, or supervision can live together
- behavioral supports - help in managing behaviors so that you can become as independent as possible
- independent living - help in transitioning to living on your own
- social, sport, and recreational activities - help in accessing activities in your community
- employment assistance - help for you to do and keep your job
- supported employment - a job with supports by service providers done by a person with a disability in the same job setting as a worker without a disability,
- assistive technology - services such as a computer or a service animal to help you be independent
- accessible housing - housing in your community that is available to meet the needs of your disability
- transportation options - public and private transportation to help you be independent and stay involved in your community
- protection and advocacy services - help with having a voice and choice with what is important in your life
- mental health services and supports - help with mental illness and substance use problems

Another type of help is called natural supports. These are contacts with others that happen naturally in your everyday life. They can be your family members, friends, neighbors, or coworkers. Natural supports can help you be more fully included in your community.

Texas Health and Human Services includes two state agencies: Texas Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas Department of State Health Services. Each of the HHS agencies helps with providing community and long-term services and supports.

TIMELINE

Every agency and service provider has its own set of rules for eligibility and timelines for services. Agencies will try to give you services as soon as possible after deciding if you are eligible. Not all services may be available right away. An agency may place your name on an “interest list” when a service is not available right away. The agency will contact your family when services are available.

Parents: If your child is identified with a developmental disability, put his or her name on an interest list until services are available, you can find more information about the interest list here <https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/records-statistics/interest-list-reduction>. Please know that it may take years.

When or before you turn 14:

- Identify any needs you have for long-term services and supports.
- Identify the type of long-term services and supports you may need.
- Explore the community and long-term services and supports that are available.
- Contact community and long-term services and supports agencies to discuss eligibility information.
- Apply for long-term services and supports if appropriate.

When or before your turn 16:

- Identify natural supports.
- Routinely check with HHSC to see where you are on the waiver list.

When or before your turn 18:

- Apply for long-term services and supports, if appropriate, if you have not already done so.
- Begin using natural supports if you are not yet doing so.

After graduation:

- Continue to contact community and long-term services and supports as needed. Continue to use and expand natural supports.

WHO CAN HELP

• **Local School**

Your school district has a transition and employment designee (TED) to help you and your parents with information about community and long-term services and supports. You can find information about your school’s TED at:

<http://framework.esc18.net/display/W ebforms/ESC18FWCountyInformation.aspx?ID=Transition>

• **Texas Transition Network Contacts – Transition in Texas**

The transition specialist at your regional education service center (ESC) can give you and your parents information about community and long-term services/supports. A list of transition specialists can be found at:

<http://www.transitionintexas.org/Page/7>

• **AskTED**

AskTED is an online list of Texas schools, including charter schools. Use this list to find contact information for districts, schools, and education service centers.

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/districtinfo.aspx>

- **Texas School District Foster Care Liaison**

Each School district/charter school in Texas has to have at least one person to help a student who is in foster care *enroll in or transfer* to a school or charter school. A list of the foster care liaisons can be found at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/FosterCareStudentSuccess/liaisons/>

- **Health and Human Services (HHS)**

Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) provides millions of Texans with services each year. If you need medical care or food for your children, dignified care in a nursing home or assisted living facility, to find someone to provide services so you can live independently:

<https://hhs.texas.gov/hhs-services>

Call HHS Services to speak to a trained professional: 1-855-937-2372

- What I need to know about long term care:

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/aging/long-term-care/what-you-need-know>

- HHS Employment First Page: This site has resources and training related to employment for individuals with intellectual and development disabilities.

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/employment/employment-first>

- Resources for persons with an intellectual or developmental disability

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/intellectual-or-developmental-disabilities-idd-long-term-care>

- Questions about your benefits:

<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/QuickAnswers/index.shtml>

- Consumer Rights: Consumer Rights and Services is part of Texas Health and Human Services. Their primary responsibility is to accept complaints about the treatment of older people and people with disabilities.

<https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/your-rights/consumer-rights-services/about-consumer-rights-services>

- **2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network**

This site has information about local services, programs, and agencies.

<https://www.211texas.org/>

- **Disability Rights Texas**

Disability Rights Texas is the federally designated legal protection and advocacy agency (P&A) for people with disabilities in Texas. You can contact the local office for help.

<http://www.disabilityrightstx.org/>

- **Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD)**

TCDD supports organizations to help people with developmental disabilities live on their own.

<http://www.tcdd.texas.gov/>

- **Texas State Independent Living Council**

Find a center for independent living in Texas.

<http://txsilc.org/index.php/en/>

- **Private Providers Association of Texas (PPAT)**

PPAT is your connection to great people, timely information, essential tools, and effective advocacy.

<https://www.ppat200.com/>

- **Directory of Community Resources in Texas**
<http://disabilityresources.tamu.edu/>
- **Special Olympics Texas**
www.sotx.org/get-involved/families/adult-transition/

Please send additional thoughts and comments to sped@tea.state.tx.us

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Learning is life-long. After you graduate from high school, any type of learning you get is called “postsecondary” education. Your interests, abilities, and goals will affect the kinds of jobs you may want and what postsecondary education you should get. Once you know what kind of job you want, you should explore the postsecondary education programs that will prepare you and work best for you. Even if you are unsure about what job you would like to do, you should still consider ways to continue to learn after high school. Learning keeps your mind sharp and is a great way to meet new people after graduation.

Postsecondary education provides you with a chance to:

- Gain knowledge and skills to get a job
- Start a career
- Meet new people
- Try out new and interesting experiences
- Learn to think and live on your own

It is important to remember that going straight from high school to college or a training program isn't a good fit for everyone. You may want a break, a chance to achieve a personal goal, or time to earn money for school. You can also use the time after you graduate to volunteer, take classes to pursue a hobby, or gain new experiences and increase your self-advocacy skills within your community.

It is important for you to know your rights and responsibilities as a postsecondary education student. Colleges and training programs do not provide special education services; however, students with disabilities do have rights and protections through the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504). If you go to a postsecondary school after graduation, you will likely need to find new ways to receive the learning supports you may need to be successful. Most colleges or training programs have a disability services office that can help you find and get the learning supports you need. Before taking classes, consider meeting with the disability services office so you can discuss what supports you got during high school and what supports you think you will need once classes begin. Don't be afraid to ask for help or to ask questions. These offices were created to help students.

Part of transition planning is helping you to find the right job for you based on your skills, interests, and abilities. This section has information about postsecondary choices, programs, and resources to help you with life after graduation.

There are many ways to learn after you graduate from high school:

- traditional college classes – classes that you attend at a college or university
- community or junior colleges classes – classes that you attend at a community or junior college
- online classes – classes that you take on a computer through the internet
- training and technical centers – places where you learn how to do specific a job or career
- continuing education programs – classes that will bring you up to date in a particular area of knowledge or skills
- informal classes – classes that you take outside of the formal education system and that tend to be short-term and voluntary
- on-the-job training – training that you get at work while you are doing your job.
- internships

- mentorships
- job shadowing
- volunteer work or community service

Here are some important points for you to remember when you are looking for learning supports after high school:

- Your learning journey is what you make of it. While many learning supports are often available to help you, they cannot guarantee your success. Only you can determine your success.
- You will likely receive support services based on your eligibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 at the college or training program you choose, but you are responsible for asking for them. The learning supports offered to you will vary depending on the college or training program. Be open and honest about what you need to be successful and don't be afraid to ask for help if you have questions.
- You will need copies of important papers (evaluations, transcripts, Summary of Performance) before you graduate from high school to give your college or training program's disability service office. Consider contacting their disability service office before you graduate to make sure you have all of the important papers that they require before you start taking classes.
- You may receive some learning supports free, but you may have to pay for others.
- You determine your success. Remember to advocate for what you need so that you have the tools to be successful.
- You should keep in contact with the people who give you learning supports. If your learning supports are not working, let them know and figure out a solution together. Be open to new and creative ideas and try to stay positive. Change can be scary, but your education is worth it.

There are online resources available that can help you with:

- deciding what you want to learn
- choosing the best learning setting and environment for you
- applying for learning supports
- paying for learning after high school

TIMELINE

Planning for postsecondary education is important and should be done as early as possible. Once you decide that you want to continue learning after high school, start planning your next steps.

When or before you turn 14:

- Start saving money for your postsecondary education. Explore saving options including ABLE accounts, a special needs trust, and 529 plans.
- Talk to your school counselor, parents, and other adults about jobs. Try to talk with people who have jobs that interest you and ask them what they like and dislike about their jobs. Also ask them about the learning they did to prepare for their job and consider asking to shadow them as they work.
- Identify your dream school's or training program's admission requirements and work to achieve them.
- Work hard in your classes to develop the skills you will need to be successful in postsecondary education.
- Participate in extracurricular, volunteer, and in-class activities.
- Develop your graduation plan.

- Apply for vocational rehabilitation services to receive pre-employment transition services through Texas Workforce Commission-Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

When or before you turn 16:

- Explore careers.
- Review your graduation plan to make sure that you are on track to graduate and are taking the classes you need for admission to the postsecondary education of your choice.
- Attend career information and personal development events.
- Find out about the living options available where you want to attend postsecondary education.
- Talk to your ARD committee and let them know you want to pursue secondary education.
- Participate in your ARD committee meetings to set your postsecondary education goals.
- Determine what tests you need to take before applying to postsecondary education (SAT, ACT, ASVAB, TSI).
- Take a dual credit, AP, college class, and/or other course to get a head start in getting your degree before high school graduation. If you are in foster care, you are eligible for a tuition waiver.

When or before you turn 18:

- Apply for postsecondary education or training programs.
- Develop a plan to pay for your postsecondary education.
- Apply for financial aid (FASFA, grants, and scholarships).
- Contact the disability service office of the postsecondary school that you plan to attend before starting classes.
- Apply for the Education Training Voucher (ETV) to help with postsecondary education and other expenses if you are in foster care.

After graduation:

- Ask for and receive your Summary of Performance (document from your high school about your academic and functional skills, including recommendations to help you in meeting your postsecondary goals).
- Ask for and receive for the prior written notice about your change of placement when you graduate.
- Get what you will need for your postsecondary education or training (diploma, transcripts, etc.).
- Enroll and attend postsecondary school or training program.

WHO CAN HELP

- **Texas Colleges and Universities Disability Services Website Links**

This includes links to the websites of many colleges and universities throughout Texas, as well as links to information about services for students with disabilities if available. The office that provides advocacy and arranges for academic support and campus accessibility for students with disabilities is usually called Disability Services. Please note, many schools have campuses in more than one location which are not all listed here.

<http://www.tcdd.texas.gov/resources/publications/texas-higher-education-guide-to-disability-services/>

- **Local School**

The local school district has a transition and employment designee (TED) to help you, your parents, and the school with information about school or training after graduation from high

school. You can find information about your school's TED at:

<http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18-FW-CountyInformation.aspx?ID=Transition>

- **Local Resources**

You and your parents may find information about school/training after graduation in your community. This may include local offices of state agencies or support groups.

- **Texas Transition Network Contacts – Transition in Texas**

The transition specialist at your regional education service center (ESC) can give you and your parents information about school or training after graduation from high school. A list of transition experts can be found at:

<http://www.transitionintexas.org/Page/7>

- **AskTED**

AskTED is an online list of Texas schools, including charters. Use this directory to find contact information for districts, schools, and education service centers.

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/districtinfo.aspx>

- **Texas School District Foster Care Liaison**

Each school district and charter school in Texas has to have at least one person to help a student who is in foster care *enroll in or transfer* to a school or charter school. A list of the foster care liaisons can be found at:

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/FosterCareStudentSuccess/liaisons/>

- **Texas CTE Resource Center**

Texas CTE is an online website that gives you information on different career choices.

<https://www.txcte.org/teachers>

- **Advising High School Students with Disabilities on Postsecondary Options**

This link contains answers to counselors' most frequently asked questions about opportunities after high school for students with disabilities.

<http://www.heath.gwu.edu/>

- **Apply Texas**

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the colleges or universities on this site have online applications to any Texas public university as well as to some community and private colleges.

www.applytexas.org

- **College Board**

This organization has resources, programs, and services in college readiness and college success. It includes the SAT and the Advanced Placement Programs.

www.collegeboard.org

- **Compare College TX**

This interactive, mobile-friendly web tool helps you learn about Texas public universities and community colleges. Compare colleges on key measures such as tuition and fees, completion rates, and average salaries after college.

www.comparecollegetx.com

- **Every Chance Every Texan**
 The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website lists state resources for helping you pay for education after high school in Texas.
<http://www.everychanceeverytexan.org/>
- **Generation Texas**
 This website has inspirational stories from real Texans and has resources to help you learn about postsecondary choices where you may live after high school.
www.gentx.org
- **Higher Education Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities**
 This site lists disability services available at Texas colleges and universities and is available from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities.
<http://tcdd.texas.gov/resources/publications/>
- **Labor Market and Career Information**
 This Texas Workforce Commission resource lists career information and related products, planning tools, and services.
<http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/index.asp>
- **Own Your Own Future**
 As a part of the Texas Gear Up program, this website gives you information and tools to prepare, guide, support, and encourage you to attend postsecondary education.
<http://www.ownyourownfuture.com/>
- **Texas Workforce Commission**
 The Texas Workforce Commission's Career Exploration & Trends webpage has resources for you about new careers, wage and job information. The website helps you choose a job based on your interests and abilities. The website also helps you find and use other resources for finding a job.
<http://twc.state.tx.us/customers/jsemp/career-exploration-trends.html>
- **Texas OnCourse**
 Texas OnCourse is an online website that has college and career resource information to help you plan for college and work.
[https://texasoncourse.org/.](https://texasoncourse.org/)
- **The Next Step Video and Discussion Guide**
The Next Step is a video that challenges you, your family, and your educators to think about higher education. The guide has information sheets about higher education for you, your parents, and others.
<http://tcdd.texas.gov/resources/publications/the-next-step-video-and-discussion-guide/>
- **Think College**
 This website gives you information about colleges for people with intellectual disabilities. Resources and tools for students, families, and professionals are available, also.
<http://www.thinkcollege.net/>
- **College Resources for Students with Disabilities**
 Find the best colleges to help you meet your goals. Learn more about the schools and programs in your area.
<http://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/disabled-students/>

- **Education Reach for Texans**

Find information and post-secondary, community, and state agency resources for foster youth and alumni. More information can be found at:

<http://www.educationreachfortexans.org/resources.html>

- **Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

The main purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program through Texas Workforce Commission is to help Texans with disabilities, which meet eligibility requirements, prepare for, find, keep, and advance in jobs through provided services. The VR program has no waiting list.

Historically, VR services have been provided through two divisions, the Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the Division for Blind Services (DBS). However, as mandated by SB208 of the 84th legislature, the divisions have combined as of October 1, 2017.

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/programs/vocational-rehabilitation-program-overview>

- **Federal Student Aid**

The U.S. Department of Education website gives you information on how you can prepare for college, what types of aid may be available, how to qualify and apply for aid, and how to manage loans.

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/>

Please send additional thoughts and comments to sped@tea.state.tx.us

INFORMATION SHARING WITH HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCIES AND PROVIDERS

INTRODUCTION

The school is the first agency that gives you transition services. The school will help you and your parents write your goals for after high school. Schools are also responsible for helping you get information about agencies and programs. Transition planning is a natural way to make connections with federal, state, or local agencies that can provide you with services after high school.

Schools must follow the law when sharing information about you with another agency. This section is about sharing information with federal, state, and local agencies and how this may help you get the services you need.

Your information is private and can only be shared once you turn 18 if your parents or you give the school permission. When the school asks for permission to share your information, the school must tell you or your parents:

- what information the school will share
- with whom the school will share the information
- why the school will share it

An agency needs to know about your disability and what help you may need. The school may share your information with other agencies to help you get the services you need. Schools and agencies should work together to make sure that you get services you need when you need them. Inviting agencies to your admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee meetings is one way to talk about what you may need.

- Here are some questions to consider if you are thinking about sharing your personal information:
- Why is someone asking for information?
- What information is the agency requesting?
- Who else will get the information?
- How will the information be provided? Verbally - over the phone or in person, written, or online?
- Did you, or your parent, if you are younger than 18, get a copy of the privacy policy and notice of the information above?
- Did you, or your parent, if you are younger than 18, sign the permission form?

Some of the agencies that may provide you with services and with whom your information may need to be shared are:

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC or HHS)

The HHSC has resources and programs that provide direct services to people in need, including Medicaid, CHIP, TANF, food stamps, family violence services, refugee services, disaster relief, disability services, and health services.

<http://www.hhs.texas.gov>

Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) works with communities to promote safe and healthy families and protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, 38

neglect, and exploitation. We do this through investigations, services and referrals, and prevention programs.

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/default.asp

Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWCVR)

TWCVR has services for people with physical and mental disabilities to help them become more independent and to prepare for, find, and keep a job.

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services>

TIMELINE

When or before you turn 14:

- Find out about other agencies and service providers that can help you after high school graduation.
- Ask if the school has invited people from other agencies to your ARD committee meeting that may provide or pay for transition services.

When or before you turn 16:

- Continue to get information about other agencies and service providers that can help you after high school graduation.
- Ask if the school has invited specific agencies to your ARD committee meeting that may provide or pay for transition services.
- Ask your school counselor, vocational adjustment coordinator (VAC), or transition employment designee (TED) who their contacts at the different agencies are.

When or before you turn 18:

- Make contact and provide information to agencies that may provide or pay for transition services.
- Work with your TED to develop your Summary of Performance.

After graduation:

- Follow up with any agencies that may provide or pay for transition services.

WHO CAN HELP

• Local School

Your school district has a transition and employment designee (TED) to help you and your parents with information about beginning to make life choices for yourself. You can find information about your school's TED at:

<http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18FWCountyInformation.aspx?ID=Transition>

• Local Resources

Local offices of state agencies or support groups may provide you and your parents with additional assistance regarding information sharing.

• Texas Transition Network Contacts – Transition in Texas

The transition specialist at your regional education service center (ESC) can provide you and your parents with additional assistance regarding information sharing. A list of transition specialists can be found at:

<http://www.transitionintexas.org/Page/7>

- **AskTED**

AskTED is an online directory of Texas schools, including charters. Use this directory to find contact information for districts, schools, and education service centers.

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/districtinfo.aspx>

- **Texas School District Foster Care Liaison**

Each school district and charter school in Texas has to have at least one person to help a student who is in foster care *enroll in* or *transfer* to a school or charter school. A list of the foster care liaisons can be found at:

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/FosterCareStudentSuccess/liasons/>

- **Transition in Texas**

This site has links to the following:

- o Participation Federal and State Requirements for Agency
- o ARD Committee (IEP team) meetings Gray Letter - Consent to invite agencies to
- o [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) TEA and Texas Workforce Commission

- **Texas Education Agency**

Guidance for inviting agency representatives to ARD committee meetings can be found at:

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147499017>

- **Special Education Information Center**

This site delivers accurate and timely answers about special education to stakeholders across the state of Texas. Representatives are available at 1-855-SPEDEX

<http://www.spedtex.org/>

- **Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

- **The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

The Privacy Rule, a federal law, gives you rights over your health information and sets rules and limits on who can look at and receive your health information.

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html>

Please send additional thoughts and comments to sped@tea.state.tx.us

GUARDIANSHIP AND ALTERNATIVES TO GUARDIANSHIP

INTRODUCTION

When you turn 18, you are considered an adult. When this happens, you take over the right to make your own educational decisions. Your admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee may discuss the transfer of rights at any time, but is required to:

- explain in your individualized education program (IEP) by the time you turn 17, that your parent's control over your educational decisions will transfer to you when you turn 18
- notify you and your parent, when you turn 18, in writing, about the transfer of rights to you unless someone has been granted guardianship for you
- When all rights transfer to you, the law will consider you able to make your own financial, educational, and medical decisions. Hopefully, with preparation and planning you will be ready for the responsibilities of adulthood. This section has information about alternatives to guardianship, guardianship, and other resources.

Decision-Making

To help you decide if and which level of support you need, consider the following questions:

- What kind of supports do I need to make decisions?
- What kind of decision needs to be made for me?
- Have I made a decision like this before?
- Has someone helped me understand the risks and benefits?
- How will this decision affect my life?
- How long will the decision affect me?
- How hard would it be to undo?

Alternatives to Guardianship in Adulthood

There are some examples of alternatives to guardianship in your life.

- **Supported Decision-Making**

If you would like help making agreements, you can use a supported decision-making agreement. Supported decision-making is a process where you can ask another adult to help you understand the situations and choices you have to face.

Supported decision-making means choosing someone you trust to help you make decisions. Your helper, or supporter, can be someone like your parents. Your supporter CANNOT make decisions for you. Your supporter CAN:

- Help you understand your choices and decisions
- Help you get and understand information to help you make your decisions
- Help you tell your decisions to other people
- With supported decision-making, you make your own choices with help. This lets you be more independent.

- **Education**

- **Invited Members of ARD Committee** - You, as an adult student, or the school may invite your parents to ARD committee meetings to listen and to help you make decisions. You or the school may invite other people to attend the meeting if it is helpful.
- **Educational Power of Attorney** - This is a document you sign that allows another person to make decisions for you in the area that you say, but you still keep the right to make decisions without this person. This might include

transition planning activities and other topics about your education.

- **Daily Living**

- **Supportive and Trusted Individuals, Family Members, and Friends** - These people help you by explaining benefits and risks when making decisions about things like money management, cooking, hygiene, health care, safety, and relationships.
- **Community-Based Medical Waiver Programs** - These programs help you with your medical and personal needs in the home or in the community.
- **Care Management Services** - Agencies provide these services to help you be on your own as much as possible.
- **Free or Reduced Price Meals, Foods and Prescription Delivery** - These are services which may be provided to you by federal, state, or local groups.
- **Free or Reduced Price Transportation** - These include taxi vouchers, van services, and public transit for appointments when mobility and safety are concerns.
- **Daily Call or Home Visit Services** - These services include volunteers who call you daily to give you help if you need it, and to provide you with social contact.
- **Utility Companies** - A utility company may notify another person, such as your parent, if you have not paid a utility bill on time.
- **Durable Power of Attorney** - This document lets another person participate in your ARD committee meetings. It also allows him or her to arrange, apply for, and coordinate services for you. This person may also talk with agencies about benefits for you.
- **Technology** - Devices such as smart phones and tablets may help you become and remain independent for example, you can look at pictures and verbal instructions and set timers and alarms to remind you when to take medication, turn off the stove, and lock the door.

- **Medical Decisions**

- **Medical Release Forms** - These forms tell you what medical records of yours can be shared with others. The forms also tell you who gets to see your medical records.
- **Medical Power of Attorney** - This form lets you say who can make health care decisions for you if you cannot make the decisions for yourself.
- **Declaration for Mental Health Treatment** - These are instructions for mental health treatment.
- **Surrogate Decision Makers** - This allows someone to make decisions for you if you are in a hospital or nursing home, in a coma, unable to act or respond, or are mentally or physically unable to communicate. The decisions must be based on what you would want (if known).
- **Surrogate Decision Making for Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability or Related Conditions (ICF/IID) Clients** - If you are living in a facility and cannot make a major medical or dental decision, a surrogate (for example, one of your relatives who helps take care of you) may do so. If there are no surrogates available, a surrogate consent committee may make the decision for you.

- **Financial Decisions**

- **Credit Union and Banking Services** - These banks may give you help with money-management.
- **Credit and Debit Cards** - A debit card may be used to help you follow a budget and a credit card that you pay off each month can help you establish your credit history.
- **Representative Payee** - This is a person or a business appointed by an agency to give funds (for example, Social Security or Veterans Administration benefits) to

help you with your financial responsibilities. The payee must keep records and report spending to the funding agency made on your behalf. These funds are to be used for basic needs including food, clothing, medical care, and a place to live.

- o **Durable Power of Attorney** - This allows you to choose another person to make financial and business decisions for you. This includes transferring property, banking, investing, and tax matters.
- o **Special Needs Trust** – This lets you have a person or company manage your property (for example, your home) and money (for example life insurance or cash). This trust may help you make sure that you do not risk losing your eligibility for federal programs (for example Medicaid and SSI). Money in a trust is money that you have in addition to the money that you get from governmental benefits and does not replace those benefits.

Guardianship

A guardian is someone who is given the power to make decisions for you if you are not capable of taking care of yourself. The guardian makes all decisions in areas such as healthcare, housing, and financial affairs (how you spend your money). The appointment of a guardian is a legal process decided by a court. The law allows guardianship only when it is needed. A judge makes that decision if you have a physical or mental condition and are unable to make decisions or take care of yourself. Guardianship limits your freedom of choice, self-determination, decision-making, and independence.

A judge may also agree to limited guardianship where you make some decisions. Limited guardianship may include financial or medical decision-making. Your guardian would make healthcare and financial decisions for you.

A guardian may be appointed at any time once you turn 18. Over time, the individual who serves as your guardian may be changed with the approval of the court. If your abilities to care for yourself and make decisions later improve, the guardianship might even be ended and removed. Even while you have a guardian, you can keep the right to make some of your own decisions, such as who to vote for in elections.

TIMELINE

When or before you turn 14:

- Consider your strengths, needs, and level of responsibility.
- Learn and use self-advocacy skills, self-determination skills, and decision-making skills.

When or before you turn 16:

- Consider the need for guardianship or guardianship options.

When or before you turn 17:

- When you turn 17, ask for and receive notice about what rights you will have when you become an adult.

When or before you turn 18:

- Transfer of rights to you at age 18.

After graduation:

- Ask for help in making life decisions or help with other needs.
- If you have a guardian, consider if the guardian is a good fit, if someone else might be a better guardian, or whether to ask for guardianship to be removed and rights restored.

WHO CAN HELP

- **Local School**
The local school district has a transition and employment designee (TED) to help you, your parents, and the school with information about guardianship and guardianship alternatives. You can find information about your school's TED at: <http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18-FW-CountyInformation.aspx?ID=Transition>
- **Local Resources**
You and your parents may find information about guardianship and guardianship alternatives in your community. This may include local offices of state agencies or support groups.
- **Texas School District Foster Care Liaison**
Each School district/charter school in Texas has to have at least one person to help a student who is in foster care *enroll in* or *transfer* to a school/charter school. A list of the foster care liaisons can be found at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/FosterCareStudentSuccess/liaisons/>
- **Disability Rights Texas**
Disability Rights Texas is the federal legal protection and advocacy agency (P&A) for people with disabilities in Texas. Its mission is to help people with disabilities understand and exercise their rights under the law.
<http://www.disabilityrightstx.org/>
- **Legal Hotline for Texans**
The Legal Hotline for Texans answers questions in many areas of law. It includes but is not limited to consumer matters, housing and public benefits, wills and probate, guardianship, taxes, and personal injury. The hotline is free of charge.
<http://texaslawhelp.org/resource/alternatives-to-guardianship?ref=DLLlx>
- **Texas Guardianship Association**
The Texas Guardianship Association gives training in the basics and practices of guardianship. It provides information about guardianship in Texas. <http://texasguardianship.org/about/>
- **Texas Guardianship Certification Board**
This website provides information about guardianship certification.
<http://www.jbcc.txcourts.gov/jbcc/guardianship-certification.aspx>
- **Texas Project First**
Texas Project First's website has information about guardianship and guardianship alternatives.
www.texasprojectfirst.org/Guardianship.html
- **The Arc of Texas**
The Arc of Texas teaches people with disabilities and their families how to advocate for themselves..
www.thearcoftexas.org

Please send additional thoughts and comments to sped@tea.state.tx.us

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ALL RELEVANT STATE AGENCIES

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

Please contact: Erin Wilder (512) 424-4048

Email: erin.wilder@twc.state.tx.us

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHS)

Please dial 2-1-1

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

Please dial 2-1-1

Texas Education Agency

Please dial (512) 463-9414 or email sped@tea.state.tx.us

Please send additional thoughts and comments to sped@tea.state.tx.us

TEXAS TRANSITION AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDE DEFINITIONS

Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee - A committee made up of a student's parent(s) and school personnel who are involved with the education of the student. The student may also be a member of the ARD committee. The ARD committee determines a student's eligibility to receive special education services and develops the student's individualized education program (IEP). Federal law uses the term "IEP team," which means the same thing as "ARD committee."

Access - The ability to find, manipulate, and use information, an object, a place, a service, or a program in an efficient and comprehensive manner.

Accommodation - changes to the work environment or to the circumstances under which a particular task is customarily performed that enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position

Advocate - a person who argues for or supports another person, a cause or set of beliefs; the act of speaking on behalf of another person, cause or set of beliefs

Age-appropriate - Age-appropriate describes activities appropriate for the student's chronological age regardless of the student's cognitive and physical ability.

Age of Majority - The age when a person is considered an adult. The age of majority in Texas is 18. Unless, by court order, a student who is 18 years of age or older has been determined to be incompetent or the student's rights have been otherwise restricted, parental rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) transfer to student with a disability when the student reaches 18 years of age, except that the local educational agency must continue to provide any required notice to both the parents and the student.

Agency - a federal, state, or local organization created by law to carry out responsibilities of the government, including providing resources and services to the general public and overseeing the way those resources and services are provided by local offices and other public organizations.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - The ADA is a federal law that will not allow a school to discriminate against a person because of the person's disability. Schools, including colleges and universities, must make sure that students with disabilities can access all of the school's programs and activities. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.

Assistive technology - Assistive technology helps people with disabilities to complete daily living tasks independently, assists them in communicating with other individuals, and provides access to education, employment, and recreation.

Competitive Employment - Work that is performed by an individual with a disability in an integrated setting at minimum wage or higher and at a rate comparable to non-disabled workers performing the same task.

Courses of Study - A multi-year description of coursework from the student's current to anticipated exit year that is designed to help achieve the student's desired post-school goals. The courses of study may be a four to six-year plan, which may need to be updated as the student progresses.

Customized Employment - A flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both.

The process is based on an individualized match between the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate and the identified business needs of an employer.

Developmental Delay - Includes a child whose development, as measured by appropriate diagnostic tests and procedures, lags behind peers in one or more of the following areas:

- physical development
- cognitive development
- communication development
- social or emotional development
- adaptive development

Disability - A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual, who has a record of such an impairment, or who is regarded as having such an impairment.

Discrimination - Actions or attitudes that treat a group of people differently based on the common characteristics of that group, such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, physical or mental condition, or beliefs.

Durable Power of Attorney - A written document that authorizes another person (the agent) to act on behalf of the individual. The power to act as the agent will continue in effect if the individual becomes incapacitated.

Educational Power of Attorney - A type of special or limited power of attorney allowing decisions to be made by another person (the agent) on behalf of someone but only about schooling and education matters. This power of attorney will provide the details of what kind of educational questions may be answered by the agent.

Eligibility - Criteria or requirements that determine a right to participate in a particular activity, service, or program.

Employee - An individual who works for a business, organization, or person.

Employer - A business or person who hires others to work for them.

Employment - When an individual works as a paid employee for a business, organization, or person, works in one's own business or as an independent consultant or contractor, or is on active duty in the military.

Entitlement - A right to benefits specified by law or contract; a government program and/or funding to provide support and benefits to members of a specified group.

Functional Skills - Skills that enable an individual to communicate and interact with others, and to perform tasks that have practical use and meaning at home, in the community or on the job.

Goal - An outcome or result that an individual is trying to achieve; goals can be for short-term time periods or long-term time periods.

Guardian - A person appointed by the court to take care of and protect someone who does not have the capacity to provide for her or himself, care for own health, or manage own financial affairs. The exact scope of the guardian's authority is defined by the court.

Guardianship Alternatives - Legal documents or structured techniques that do not totally deprive an individual of self- autonomy and control. They are less restrictive by limiting the area or nature in which another person will exercise decision-making for someone. Examples

include educational power of attorney, payee arrangements, and medical power of attorney.

Independent - Able to function by oneself, self-supporting; not forced to rely on another for money or support.

Individual Education Program (IEP) - A written statement for each student with a disability that is developed reviewed and revised by the ARD committee, of which parents are active members. The IEP includes the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, participation in State and district-wide assessments, transition services, annual goals, special factors, special education, related services, supplementary aids and services, extended school year services, and least restrictive environment.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - The United States federal law that governs how each state and the public schools in the state provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities.

Integrated Employment - Employment at a work site at which an individual routinely interacts with people without disabilities in addition to the individual's work site supervisor or service providers.

Intellectual Disability - A term used to describe certain limitations in mental functioning and in developmental skills such communicating, taking care of personal needs, learning in school, and social skills; sometimes called cognitive disabilities or, in the past, mental retardation.

Medicaid - This is a medical coverage provided to a person by the state Title XIX program.

Medicare - Health insurance program for eligible disabled persons and persons aged 65 or older usually consisting of hospital insurance under Medicare (Part A), supplemental medical insurance under Medicare (Part B); and voluntary prescription drug coverage with a Prescription Drug Provider (PDP) (Part D). Low-income beneficiaries with Medicare can get extra help paying their prescription drug coverage premiums by filing an application with SSA.

Medical Power of Attorney - A type of special or limited power of attorney allowing decisions to be made by another person (the agent) on behalf of someone but only about medical and health matters. It will provide the details of what kind of medical questions may be answered by the agent.

Natural Environment - Places and social contexts commonly used by individuals without developmental disabilities. Examples of natural environments include the neighborhood school the local child care center, social activities sponsored by Boy and Girl Scouts, YMCA/YWCA, Parks and Recreation, and activities sponsored through religious organizations.

Natural Support - Support and assistance that naturally flows from the associations and relationships typically developed in natural environments such as the family and community. Examples of natural supports are extended family and friends.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) - Training provided for a paid employee that provides the knowledge and skills needed to fully perform the requirements of the job.

Person-Directed Planning – The student and the legally authorized representative (LAR) on the student's side, direct the development of a plan of supports and services to meet personal needs and preferences.

Postsecondary - The time in a person's life after high school.

Postsecondary Goals - Goals that a student hopes to achieve after leaving high school.

Measurable postsecondary goals are based on age appropriate transition assessments, interest inventories, other evaluation data, and or student/parent information.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) -In the IEP process, the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance establish the performance levels in course work and skills for the student at the time each individualized education program (IEP) is written.

Referral - A recommendation or suggestion that a specific agency or service provider might be able to provide services that a person needs.

Rehabilitation Services - Aim to enhance and restore functional ability and quality of life to those with physical impairments or disabilities. Specifically vocational rehabilitation (VR) helps to restore a person's ability to work by providing training for new occupations, locating jobs, retaining jobs, and building permanent careers.

Related Services - The term related services means transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as may be required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education.

Representative Payee - A person or entity appointed by a government agency administering financial benefits (for example, Social Security Administration or Veterans Administration) to manage the cash benefits approved by the agency for the beneficiary. The Representative Payee assures the funds are used for basic needs including food, clothing and shelter, maintains records, and reports to the agency all expenditures made on behalf of an individual with a disability.

Résumé - A brief written account of personal, educational, and professional qualifications and experience, as that prepared by an applicant for a job.

Rights - The power or privilege to which one is justly entitled.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - A national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability.

Self-Advocacy - Speaking up for oneself in support of his or her own ideas, beliefs or needs.

Self-Advocate - An individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights.

Self-Determination - The right and ability of all persons to direct their own lives, as well as the responsibility to accept the consequences of their own choices.

Self-Employment - When an individual owns his or her own company and works as a consultant, or as a contracted employee.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) - SSDI provides benefits to disabled or blind persons who are insured by workers' contributions to the Social Security trust fund. These contributions are based on individual earnings (or those of a spouse or parents). Social Security Disability Insurance is authorized under Title II of the Social Security Act.

Supported Decision-Making - A structured approach that uses a trusted and trained friend, family member, or professional to help an individual with an intellectual, developmental, or other cognitive disability understand a situation, consider options, and make an informed decision. Volunteers are trained on the principles of self-determination and do not choose or decide on behalf of the individual. A written agreement documents the pairing of a volunteer with an

individual with a disability.

Summary of Performance (SOP) - A cumulative document that goes with the student when he or she exits high school by graduating or aging out of public education. This document can assist adult agency service providers and inform postsecondary educators about a student's past performance to better meet the needs of the young adult.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) - The SSI program makes cash assistance payments to aged, blind, and disabled persons (including children) who have limited income and resources. The SSI program is authorized under Title XVI of the Social Security Act.

Supported Employment - An individual with a disability is supported on the job by a job coach or another employee.

Taxes - Percentage of an employee's earnings that an employer is required to take from a worker's pay. This money is sent to federal and state governments.

Ticket to Work (TTW) - The TTW Program is for SSI or SSDI beneficiaries who want to work and participate in planning their employment. Participation in the TTW program increases available choices when obtaining employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other support services needed to get or keep a job. It is a free and voluntary service. When participating in the TTW program, an individual is using his or her ticket. Individuals might not be subject to a continuing disability review while they are using their tickets.

Transition Assessment - Ongoing process of collecting data on an individual's needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments.

Transition Services - A coordinated set of activities for student with a disability within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the individual with a disability to facilitate the individual's movement from school to post-school activities.

Vocational Education - Organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career not requiring a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

Vocational Rehabilitation - Programs designed to help individuals with disabilities in receiving training for new occupations, locating jobs, retaining jobs, and building permanent careers.

Volunteering – Agreeing to do work that one does not get paid to do.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - WIOA is a new law to improve access to education and workforce services for individuals with significant barriers to employment. This includes veterans, individuals with disabilities, out-of-school and at-risk youth, and other populations to help ensure that everyone has an opportunity to get a good job.

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FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS

Federal Requirements

34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §300.43 Transition services

(a) Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—

(1) Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(2) Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes--

(i) Instruction;

(ii) Related services;

(iii) Community experiences;

(iv) The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and

(v) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

(b) Transition services for children with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.

Regulations: Part [300](#) / [D](#) / 300.320

34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §300.320 Definition of individualized education program.
[Excerpt]

(b) Transition services. Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include--

(1) Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and

(2) The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals.

(c) Transfer of rights at age of majority. Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under State law, the IEP must include a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights

under Part B of the Act, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority under Sec. 300.520.

34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §300.321 IEP Team

(b) Transition services participants

(1) In accordance with paragraph (a)(7) of this section, the public agency must invite a child with a disability to attend the child's IEP Team meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the postsecondary goals for the child and the transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals under Sec. 300.320(b).

(2) If the child does not attend the IEP Team meeting, the public agency must take other steps to ensure that the child's preferences and interests are considered.

(3) To the extent appropriate, with the consent of the parents or a child who has reached the age of majority, in implementing the requirements of paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the public agency must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.

State of Texas Requirements

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) § 89.1055. Content of the Individualized Education

Program (IEP). [Excerpt]

(j) For each student with a disability, not later than when a student reaches 14 years of age, the ARD committee must consider and, if appropriate, address the following issues in the IEP:

(1) appropriate student involvement in the student's transition to life outside the public school system;

(2) if the student is younger than 18 years of age, appropriate involvement in the student's transition by the student's parents and other persons invited to participate by:

(A) the student's parents; or

(B) the school district in which the student is enrolled;

(3) if the student is at least 18 years of age, involvement in the student's transition and future by the student's parents and other persons, if the parent or other person:

(A) is invited to participate by the student or the school district in which the student is enrolled; or

(B) has the student's consent to participate pursuant to a supported decision-making agreement under Texas Estates Code, Chapter 1357;

(4) appropriate postsecondary education options, including preparation for postsecondary-level coursework;

(5) an appropriate functional vocational evaluation;

- (6) appropriate employment goals and objectives;
- (7) if the student is at least 18 years of age, the availability of age-appropriate instructional environments, including community settings or environments that prepare the student for postsecondary education or training, competitive integrated employment, or independent living, in coordination with the student's transition goals and objectives;
- (8) appropriate independent living goals and objectives;
- (9) appropriate circumstances for facilitating a referral of a student or the student's parents to a governmental agency for services or public benefits, including a referral to a governmental agency to place the student on a waiting list for public benefits available to the student such as a waiver program established under the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Section 1396n(c)), §1915(c); and
- (10) the use and availability of appropriate:
 - (A) supplementary aids, services, curricula, and other opportunities to assist the student in developing decision-making skills; and
 - (B) supports and services to foster the student's independence and self-determination, including a supported decision-making agreement under Texas Estates Code, Chapter 1357.

Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.0111. Beginning of Transition Planning

Appropriate state transition planning under the procedure adopted under Section [29.011](#) must begin for a student not later than when the student reaches 14 years of age.

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TRANSITION IN TEXAS TIMELINE

Transition prepares students to move from high school to adulthood. Transition in Texas begins before a student's 14th birthday, or earlier if the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee decides it would be right for you. As you get close to beginning high school, you will need to talk about what you want to do after graduation. Your transition services will be based on your needs, preferences, and interests. The ARD committee (which includes you and your parents) writes the transition plan as part of your Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The **Transition in Texas Timeline** is a tool to help you and your parents work with the other members of the ARD committee write your transition plan. Use this timeline to decide if these issues should be discussed at the ARD committee transition meetings.

Parents: If your child is identified with a developmental disability, put his or her name on an interest list until services are available, you can find more information about the interest list here <https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/records-statistics/interest-list-reduction>. Please know that it may take years.

When or before you turn 14 years of age:

Ask for or get training on how to make decisions.

Speak up for yourself—practice self-advocacy. Learn to explain your interests, preferences, and needs.

Talk with your parents and teachers about what kind of job you want.

Identify your career interests, strengths, and needs. Complete interest and career inventories.

Explore career options.

Identify training requirements for the job you want and admission standards for any school or training program you may want to attend.

Be able to explain your disability and accommodations you may need.

Build your academic and functional skills (such as personal health, money management, decision making, independent living, etc.).

Prepare to participate in ARD meetings. Talk to your parents and teachers.

Attend all ARD meetings, to which you must be invited, when transition is considered. If you do not attend, you should give information to someone on the ARD committee about your wants and needs.

Participate in the ARD discussion about transition services. Learn to be the leader of the meeting, by asking for an agenda, calling on people who want to speak, and talking to your school and parents about all your needs.

Talk with your school and parents to make sure that you take the classes you need for the job you want. Talk about the classes you need to take to attend the college or

training program of your choice after you graduate.

Talk with your ARD committee to write your personal graduation plan.

Explore other agencies and service providers that can help you after graduation from high school.

Find out about assistive technology tools that can help you to live independently and have a job.

Expand your participation with community activities, such as library projects, volunteering, recreational sports, and trying to find people with similar interests to yours.

Apply for a social security number and card, if you do not already have one. Contact the local social security office to see if you qualify for benefits.

Identify any needs you have for long-term services and supports. Explore the community and long-term services and supports that are available.

Consider the need for guardianship or guardianship alternatives.

When or before you turn 16 years of age:

Ask if your transition plan includes training on how to make decisions, along with support and services that may help you while in high school and after high school.

Identify and communicate your goals for life after high school.

Practice appropriate communication and social skills in different settings (school, peers, recreation, jobs, etc.).

Continue to talk about transition planning each year until you graduate from high school. Talk about giving permission to the school to share information with any agencies who might give or provide you with transition services. Think about why this might or might not be a good idea.

Ask the school to invite other agencies that may provide or pay for transition services to your ARD committee meeting. You or your parents must give the school permission.

Complete a functional vocational assessment if you need it.

Find out about education or training requirements for the job that you want.

Ask your school counselor about classes that you need matched to your job interest, or how to find training on your job interest.

Talk about any testing that you need for after graduation for postsecondary education or training (SAT, ACT, TSI, ASVAB). Discuss accommodations you may need. Find out about any other admission requirements.

Ask if there is financial support to help pay for any admission tests you may need. Find out how much the job training or education you are interested in will cost. Talk about the supports you will need to get and hold a job.

Explore types of transportation to a job, including public transportation.

Keep a list of your job experiences or volunteer work or clubs and sports activities. Begin a résumé and update as needed.

Practice effective communication by asking for help, identifying accommodations you need, and developing interview skills.

Practice independent living skills (such as budgeting, shopping, cooking, housekeeping, decision making, etc.).

Participate in activities within your community, such as library projects, volunteering, recreational sports, or finding people with interests similar to yours.

Identify health care needs and providers (doctors, therapists, pharmacies) to meet your needs.

Explore living options that may be available for you when you attend college or a training program after you graduate.

Contact community and long term service and support agencies to discuss eligibility information.

Ask for and receive information about the rights that are granted to your parents (other than the right to receive notice) that will transfer to you when you turn 18. This happens unless someone has been granted guardianship.

Get an identification card, voter registration, and/or driver's license and be able to communicate personal information.

When or before you turn 18 years of age:

Continue to work with your ARD committee to review and update employment goals.

Talk about the kind of work you can do. Check on who can coach you on the job, if needed.

Ask that any agencies that might help you with training or getting a job be invited to your ARD committee meeting.

Ask for and receive notification about age of majority requirements when you turn 17.

Ask for and receive your rights at age 18. Your parents will continue to receive a notice of your ARD committee meetings, but can only attend if you or the school invites them.

Voluntarily enter into a supported decision-making agreement with a supporter, or helper if needed.

Register to vote.

Register for selective service (males).

Take responsibility for being on time for classes, appointments, social activities, and work.

Ask about other services besides school that may be available for you. Develop a list of people who know you and the work you can do. Identify sources for job listings.

Practice interviewing for a job.

Apply for education or training programs.

Develop a plan to pay for postsecondary education or training.

Apply for financial help for education after high school (FASFA, grants, scholarships).

Apply for long-term services or supports, if appropriate. Learn to direct and manage these.

Explore adult recreational activities and community involvement.

Prepare for the adult model of health care.

After graduation:

Take over making decisions for your life.

Ask for and receive a Summary of Performance from the school.

Ask for and receive a prior written notice about your change of placement when you graduate.

Collect all information you will need for your postsecondary education or training (diploma, transcripts, etc.) and enroll in the program of your choice.

Accept responsibility for health care needs (make doctor or therapy appointments, fill and take your prescriptions, etc.).

Begin receiving services from agencies, if appropriate. Finalize your résumé.

Identify job openings or trainings.

Apply for jobs and talk to someone who can help coach you in your work.

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