



Fact Sheet

Transition Planning

Tips for planning a transition to a meaningful and productive adulthood

1. Create a Quality LIFE for your child beyond school:

Understand that transition is not a PLACE and it's not a PROGRAM -- the goal is to develop a sustainable set of activities or routines for your child that can move beyond his or her 22nd birthday and lead to a complete, well-rounded life.

Consider:

What will this look like for your son/daughter? For you? For your family?
(Hint: It will look different for each of you.)

What activities will this involve? Paid jobs? Volunteer jobs? A day program?
Membership at a health club or pool? Doing his fair share around the house?
What else? What are all the components that make a full and happy LIFE.

Maybe you don't know where to start? Try this exercise:

THINK ABOUT AUGUST. Really think about it.

- What did those chunks of time look like, feel like, sound like in your home?
- What activities did your child enjoy, where did he go, with whom or with what supports, who paid for it?
- Now multiply August by 12 months. That's the future. Start planning for it now.

Try new things; if they don't work out, try something else!

- Begin with filling the day with routines, activities, and people that are meaningful to your child, especially those that may be sustainable after he or she turns 22.
- Pay attention to the supports & services required to complete/sustain these activities (i.e., Does someone need to drive him or her to the activity? What is the cost, if any? Is a support person while there?)
- Know what and whom you can count to continue beyond that magic 22nd birthday.

2. Build your Rolodex:

MAKE the time to know your community and have your community know you (and your child). Take stock of whom you know and who you want to get to know.

Start a running list. This will be your single greatest resource going forward. These are your neighbors, potential employers, volunteer sites, supports and potential allies. If you belong to a faith community, get involved. Same goes for your local PTA; municipal government; League of Women Voters; Women's Clubs; civic groups like Lion's, Rotary, etc. How about a gardening club or book club or train club? These are also the people who will have the energy & resources to help you build meaningful day routines for your adult child.

Caution:

Don't just volunteer your time on disability causes. If you do, you and your child will remain off the radar screen of the general population and you want you (and your child, eventually) to be visible, known and valued as a member of the community.

3. Know your kid!

Begin with creating two running lists: On the IEP these might be called Strengths/Interests and Needs/Challenges.

- A. List the top 3 things your child does well or that he REALLY likes to do (loves maps, can spot something that's out of place in a heartbeat & wants to fix it, loves water, detail oriented, persistent, accurate, fast worker, honest, etc).

Don't despair if this list is short -- keep it handy, add to it as you can. Work on adding to it. These are potential motivators, rewards, and things to brag about to a potential job site, volunteer site, or future roommate. These are important!

- B. List the top 3 things that drive you (and others) crazy about your kid. What are the 3 biggest barriers to going out into the community with your son/daughter? What trips you up the most? These 3 things should be front and center on any IEP you help write, because these will be the biggest barriers to future employment, volunteerism, recreation, and shared living arrangements.

RESOURCES**Websites to visit:**

Support – <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/IPADDUnite>

IPADDUnite, a yahoo chat group of parents of adults with disabilities

Social Security - www.ssa.gov

Disability Rights - www.equipforequality.org

Job Opportunities - www.abilitylinks.org, www.disabilityworks.org

Special Recreation - www.specialrecreation.org

Healthcare and Family Services - www.hfs.illinois.gov

Division of Rehabilitation Services - www.dhs.state.il.us

Articles and Books:

Make the Day Matter! Promoting Typical Lifestyles for Adults with Significant Disabilities.
Pamela M. Walker & Patricia Rogan, eds., Paul Brookes Publishing, 2007.

Organization for Autism Research, A Guide for Transition to Adulthood,
<http://www.researchautism.org/resources/reading/index.asp>

Online Videos:

Transition Outreach Training for Adult Living (TOTAL) Project, Illinois State Board of Education, http://www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/html/transition_video.htm

Transition Webcasts, OCALI.org, http://ocali.org/view.php?nav_id=80



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