

# *BUILDING A BRIDGE*

*From  
School To Adult Life  
For  
Young Adults With Disabilities  
In Connecticut*

*A TRANSITION MANUAL FOR STUDENTS  
and their parents to help them take  
an active role in developing transition goals and objectives  
as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP)*

*Revised 2001*

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*This manual was originally developed through the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center by Jan Hine in collaboration with The Parent-Student Subcommittee of The Connecticut Transition Task Force with support from the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services.*

*Revised 2001*

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# Letter to Students



Dear Student,

This manual and workbook is written especially for you. We hope your high school years will be happy and successful. One of the keys to a positive education is to **PLAN NOW** for your future.

You play a very important role. According to the law, transition planning is required as part of your IEP (Individualized Education Program) when you are 14 years old. It is important you attend all meetings scheduled to develop transition goals and take an active part in charting your future.

What is a transition goal? What is an IEP? How do I participate at these meetings? Do I have to go alone? Can I bring someone? These questions, and many more, are answered for you in this manual.

Your parent(s)/guardian, teachers, and guidance counselor are available to work with you and help you reach the goals you set. As you read this manual, please stop and ask them questions whenever you do not understand something or need more information.

We want you to succeed and wish the best for you at school and in the work world as a responsible adult. This is your life. **Get involved now.** Read on.

Sincerely,

Parent-Student Subcommittee of the  
Connecticut Transition Task Force



# *Letter to Parents/Guardians*



Dear Parent/Guardian,

One of our most important and precious roles is to raise our children to become responsible adults. We all have many questions about their future regarding employment, college or training, independent living, and community participation. We want the transition from high school to young adult life to go well. We need to plan early.

The following pages contain information that will help you play a meaningful role in setting transition goals for your son/daughter's future. According to the law, transition planning is required as part of your child's IEP (Individualized Education Program) starting at age 14.

You are a key player in your child's transition planning. We urge you to actively participate in these Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings during the high school years. You bring a wealth of information about your child's abilities at home that only you can share.

Please read this manual and workbook thoughtfully and encourage your teenager to do the same. With your commitment, guidance, and support, your child will be given the educational foundation and the tools needed to confidently transition into the adult world.

Sincerely,

Parent-Student Subcommittee of the  
Connecticut Transition Task Force



# *The First Steps: Dream a Vision for the Future*

It is important for you and your parent(s) to discuss your dreams and visions for the future. No one can predict what is or is not possible. Try and explore different job possibilities and independent activities. This time of transition is a golden opportunity to try a variety of experiences “on for size”. Even if some of the dreams seem unrealistic and impossible, it gives everyone an opportunity to help you direct your dreams into realistic goals.

## **TRANSITION REALLY STARTS FROM WITHIN:**

### **KNOW** Yourself

Begin a process of self-discovery.  
Discover your strengths and weaknesses.  
Explore your likes and dislikes.



### **KNOW** Your disability

What does it mean to you?  
How does your disability impact you differently in different environments and situations?

### **KNOW** Strategies

Learn how to understand the impact of your disability.  
Find various options for different environments and situations.

### **KNOW** Your rights

Learn your rights as a citizen and as a person with a disability.  
Learn when to assert your rights.  
Learn how to assert your rights – while staying positive and approachable.  
Learn who is the appropriate person to whom you should express your rights and needs.  
Keep all of this in context; don't go overboard.

### **KNOW** How to get help

Don't be afraid or ashamed to ask for help. You should be proud that you have taken these steps to independence.

**DREAM!**

**VALUE YOURSELF, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, AND BE GOOD TO YOURSELF.**

Adapted from an article called, *1<sup>st</sup> Steps To Transition: Student Perspective*. (1999, Summer). *The Cause Advocate* Vol.14, Issue 4.

# *Crossing the Bridge: Moving from Parent-Advocacy to Self-Advocacy*

As you begin to prepare for your transition from school to adult responsibilities, it is critical that you have the skills and abilities to:

- Speak for yourself;
- Advocate for needed services and programs.

When you were a young child, your mom or dad probably talked to your teachers each year to learn how to help you do better in school. They were your advocates.

**You are now old enough to become YOUR OWN SELF-ADVOCATE.**

## **WHAT IS SELF-ADVOCACY?**

### **Self-Advocacy is:**

- A process;
- Not one specific skill;
- Not taught in a single lesson or entire course.

### **Self-Advocacy Means:**

- Self-respect;
- Respect by others;
- Assertiveness to make your needs known to others;
- A sense of responsibility to oneself and others;
- Speaking up for oneself;
- Knowing your rights and responsibilities as a citizen.



### **Young Adults Learn Self-Advocacy Skills by:**

- Watching their parents and teachers be good advocates;
- Having knowledgeable adults that provide the opportunity to practice advocacy skills.

# *What is Transition Planning?*

Transition planning is important in the life of a high school student who has a disability. Realistic goals can guide you through high school and into your post high school adult life. It is part of the federal Special Education Law. Refer to information about this law on page 32.

## **Transition Planning looks at your:**

- Strengths;
- Interests;
- Preferences.

## **It helps create a map that identifies:**

- High school experiences you need.



## **Goals identify:**

- The skills you need to learn before you leave school;
- The help you need to reach your post high school goals.

TRANSITION GOALS ARE DEVELOPED AS PART OF YOUR IEP\* BY THE PPT\*.

\* *Individualized Education Program*

\* *Planning and Placement Team*

# *The PPT-*

## *The Planning and Placement Team*

### **The Role of the PPT – Planning & Placement Team:**

- Decides if a student should be tested for eligibility for special education services;
- Reviews evaluations and determines if eligibility for services has been met;
- Plans a program for eligible students called the IEP, the Individualized Education Program. Transition goals are developed as part of the IEP.

### **PPT Members**

In order for a PPT to be a legal PPT, the following individuals must be in attendance:

- ◆ Administrator or Administrative designee who is:
  - Qualified to provide or supervise special education;
  - Knowledgeable about the curriculum;
  - Knowledgeable about the availability of resources in the school district.
- ◆ Special Education Teacher;
- ◆ Regular Education Teacher;
- ◆ Pupil Personnel Services Representative (Psychologist, Social Worker, Speech and Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, etc.) who can interpret any relevant evaluation results;
- ◆ Parent (in some circumstances a PPT can convene without the parent in attendance, however the school district must have documentation that they have made multiple attempts to arrange the PPT meeting at a mutually convenient time and location).

In addition:

- The Student must be invited if the purpose of the PPT is to discuss transition planning (PPT following the student's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday).

Additional members:

- Other agencies or individuals who have special knowledge or expertise about the student (at the discretion of the parents or school district);
- Adult services agencies or providers (BRS, BESB, DMR, and DMHAS) who may be providing or paying for services once the student exits school. Refer to information about these agencies on pages 28-29.

# *The IEP-*

## *Individualized Education Program*

- The name of the plan developed by the PPT is called the Individualized Education Program, the IEP.
- The plan defines the appropriate goals and the specific objectives/activities that need to be addressed to meet the goals.
- Decisions are made using current testing and input from school personnel, your parents, and you.
- By federal law, the IEP must be reviewed annually and appropriate adjustments made.
- Parents or school personnel may call for additional PPTs to change or review the IEP. At age 18, you have that right. Refer to page 39 for more information regarding your rights and responsibilities upon reaching the age of majority. Parents refer to page 38.
- Transition goals and objectives become part of the IEP.

### **Pre-planning for Transition, by federal law:**

- Begins when you are fourteen (usually in the eighth grade).
- Decisions are then made by the PPT regarding overall appropriate programming during high school.

### **Transition goals begin to be developed:**

- At the annual PPT following your 15<sup>th</sup> birthday by Connecticut law.
- Under federal law you must be invited to all PPTs that discuss Transition Planning. If you do not attend, the team must document that your interests and preferences were considered in determining transition needs.

### **Transition goals must address:**

- What kinds of services will be required to meet the goals;
- Who is responsible for providing the services;
- Where the services will take place;
- How long the services will be provided.

### **Transition goals must be:**

- Measurable;
- Monitored;
- Looked at yearly;
- Evaluated as to the extent to which the goals have been met;
- Rewritten if needed;
- Changed if necessary.

### **All goals should explain:**

- How success will be determined;
- What kinds of accommodations will be needed.

# *Areas to Be Considered When Developing Transition Goals and Objectives*

Requirements for graduation are one of the first things to discuss when developing plans for transition from school. You should receive a high school diploma if you have met the graduation requirements as agreed upon by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) and your local Board of Education. Whatever the guidelines, in order to make a successful transition from school to life in the community as an adult, you should acquire basic skills that must be the driving force while developing a meaningful IEP for yourself.

## **By the time you leave school you should have:**

- An awareness of your own strengths and weaknesses and know what you like and dislike;
- An understanding of your needs to enable you to live as independently as possible;
- Self-advocacy skills that allow you to express preferences and make choices;
- An ability to display appropriate social skills for participating in the life of a community;
- A basic knowledge of your rights under the law, including civic responsibilities;
- A basic understanding of community resources that can be of help.

## **Bearing in mind the statements listed above, there are four basic areas of your life that you must think about when developing transition goals:**

- Post-secondary training and education;
- Employment;
- Independent living;
- Community participation.

The following pages look at each of these areas and also provide additional information to help you and your parent(s) identify the services and supports that may be necessary for you to prepare for the transition from school to adult life.

***Not all students need goals in all areas, however, everyone should take a close look at **ADVOCACY**, discussed at the beginning of this manual, and **SOCIAL SKILLS**, discussed on the next three pages. Personal Checklists regarding your likes and dislikes, your strengths, and your skills follow that.***



# Take a Close Look at Social Skills: A Social Skills Checklist

The need to develop appropriate social skills is recognized by:

- Teachers
- Parents
- Employers
- Students

Good social skills are critical to being successful now and in all areas of the adult world.

**Feedback from employers indicates the number one difficulty in the workplace for many people with disabilities is lack of appropriate social skills with fellow employees and supervisors.**

Read the following questions about social skills. Check those you think you may need to discuss as part of your transition planning:

*Do you know how to start a conversation with:*

*People who come to your home?* \_\_\_\_\_

*People you meet at a party?* \_\_\_\_\_

*People at school/work?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you know how to act interested in the conversation of another person?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you make eye contact when carrying on a conversation with another person?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you make your needs known in an appropriate way?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you answer questions that are asked of you?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you know how to participate in a conversation?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you wait your turn to speak or do you interrupt other people's conversations?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you accept compliments from others?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you accept criticism from others?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you know what topics are appropriate for public conversation?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Are you careful not to embarrass other people?* \_\_\_\_\_

(continued on next page)



# Take a Close Look at Social Skills:

## A Social Skills Checklist (continued)

Do your parent(s)/friends/teachers say you talk too much? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you really listen to what other people are saying? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know when it's better to keep quiet? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you get angry easily and say things that you are sorry for later? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have trouble understanding jokes? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you often get into trouble in new places or in new situations? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you try to find out ahead of time what you need to know about new social situations? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you arrive to places on time? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you always rushing to catch up? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you forget appointments? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have trouble meeting school or work deadlines? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you brush your teeth daily? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you take a bath or shower daily? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you put on clean clothes daily? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know that you can send and receive messages without using words? \_\_\_\_\_

This kind of language is called **non-verbal communication**.

You send **non-verbal** messages through such things as:

- Facial expressions that show anger, fear, sadness, happiness;
- The way you stand or sit;
- Through arm, hand, or finger gestures;
- By the tone of your voice;
- The clothing you wear;
- Respecting personal space (not standing too close to other people);
- Appropriate or inappropriate touch.



## Take a Close Look at Social Skills:

### *A Social Skills Checklist (continued)*

*Do you know that many people who have social problems haven't learned how to use **non-verbal** communication?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you use appropriate table manners?*

*Use your napkin?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Say please and thank you?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Chew with your mouth closed?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you often blame other people when things don't go well in your life?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you know that taking care of your physical and mental health makes interactions with other people easier? (example: using a tissue when you have a runny nose)* \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you know that the better you feel about yourself, the better you will present yourself to others?* \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you decided that you need to improve some of your social skills? If your answer is yes, include plans to do so in your transition goals. Ask your parent(s) to review your checklist. They may want to discuss other things that you may have missed.**

Your family, teachers, and other adults can help you understand social skills, but you have to be willing to practice using them.

You may not be successful in using your new skills the first few times, but we all make mistakes. Try to learn from them, and **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE**.

**PLEASE NOTE: Sometimes professional help is necessary to work toward identifying and improving your social skills.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## *A Personal Checklist: Likes and Dislikes*

**Directions:** Put a (1) next to any hobbies, interests, or activities that you like. Put a (2) next to any activity you do not like. Then, put a circle around the 3 things you like to do the *most*.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing sports<br><input type="checkbox"/> Camping, Hiking<br><input type="checkbox"/> Fishing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Hunting<br><input type="checkbox"/> Swimming<br><input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling<br><input type="checkbox"/> Horseback Riding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Skiing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Keeping pets<br><input type="checkbox"/> Taking care of animals<br><input type="checkbox"/> Gardening or taking care<br>of plants<br><input type="checkbox"/> Farming<br><input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking<br><input type="checkbox"/> Beauty and hair care<br><input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music<br><input type="checkbox"/> Writing songs, stories, poems<br><input type="checkbox"/> Watching TV or movies<br><input type="checkbox"/> Playing an instrument<br><input type="checkbox"/> Being a leader of a group | <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Painting<br><input type="checkbox"/> Taking care of people<br><input type="checkbox"/> Babysitting<br><input type="checkbox"/> Going to church/synagogue/temple<br><input type="checkbox"/> Belonging to a club<br><input type="checkbox"/> Collecting things<br><input type="checkbox"/> Visiting with friends<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping<br><input type="checkbox"/> Eating<br><input type="checkbox"/> Using a Computer<br><input type="checkbox"/> Playing Video games<br><input type="checkbox"/> Cooking<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sewing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Knitting<br><input type="checkbox"/> Reading<br><input type="checkbox"/> Photography<br><input type="checkbox"/> Roller Blading<br><input type="checkbox"/> Motorcross<br><input type="checkbox"/> Working Out/exercising |
|--|--|

Use this space to add other hobbies and interests you can think of:


Adapted from "Speak Up for Yourself and Your Future", Department of Special Education, University of Vermont, 1993.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## *A Personal Checklist: Personal Strengths*

**Directions:** Put a (1) next to any sentence that describes you. When you have finished, put a circle around the 3 sentences that *best* describe you.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>___ I'm reliable (people can count on me).</p> <p>___ I'm friendly.</p> <p>___ I am good at many things.</p> <p>___ I try to follow instructions.</p> <p>___ I like to do things with others.</p> <p>___ I like to do things on my own.</p> <p>___ I like to help other people.</p> <p>___ I like to keep things neat and organized.</p> <p>___ I like to have a good time.</p> <p>___ I have good common sense.</p> <p>___ I stick with things until they get done.</p> <p>___ I can work out my problems on my own.</p> <p>___ I ask others for help when I need it.</p> <p>___ I can help others work out their problems.</p> <p>___ I'm good at fixing things.</p> | <p>___ I have a lot of energy.</p> <p>___ I'm a good listener.</p> <p>___ I'm polite.</p> <p>___ I'm honest.</p> <p>___ I'm hard-working.</p> <p>___ I'm usually on time.</p> <p>___ I'm serious.</p> <p>___ I'm generous.</p> <p>___ I'm proud of myself.</p> <p>___ I can keep a secret.</p> <p>___ I'm a good friend.</p> <p>___ I'm a good student.</p> <p>___ I'm musical.</p> <p>___ I'm artistic.</p> <p>___ I'm creative.</p> <p>___ I'm good with words.</p> <p>___ I'm good with my hands.</p> <p>___ I'm good at one or two things.</p> |
|---|--|

Use this space to write down your other strengths:


Adapted from "Speak Up for Yourself and Your Future", Department of Special Education, University of Vermont, 1993.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# A Personal Checklist: Skills

**Directions:** Put a (1) next to all the things you are good at. Then, put a circle around the 3 things you do *best*.

I'm good at:

- \_\_\_ Taking care of other people
- \_\_\_ Working with other people
- \_\_\_ Organizing things
- \_\_\_ Making changes
- \_\_\_ Using a computer
- \_\_\_ Answering the phone
- \_\_\_ Woodworking
- \_\_\_ House painting
- \_\_\_ Operating machines or tools
- \_\_\_ Fixing cars
- \_\_\_ Waiting on tables
- \_\_\_ Doing yard work
- \_\_\_ Farming
- \_\_\_ Hairdressing
- \_\_\_ Cleaning

- \_\_\_ Reading
- \_\_\_ Writing
- \_\_\_ Math
- \_\_\_ Science
- \_\_\_ Social Studies
- \_\_\_ Art
- \_\_\_ Sports
- \_\_\_ Music
- \_\_\_ Teaching friends
- \_\_\_ Babysitting
- \_\_\_ Gardening
- \_\_\_ Cooking
- \_\_\_ Sewing or knitting
- \_\_\_ Being a team captain

Use this space to list other things you do well:


Adapted from "Speak Up for Yourself and Your Future", Department of Special Education, University of Vermont, 1993.

# Thinking About Post-Secondary Education/Employment and Transition Goals

**Long-range goals written into your IEP regarding POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION/ EMPLOYMENT might include statements such as:**

- Continue my education and go to college;
- Become involved in a post-secondary training program to develop skills needed for a competitive job in a field that matches my interests and abilities;
- Develop vocational and academic skills required to enter an "on-the-job training" or "apprenticeship" program;
- Develop skills to seek and maintain employment;
- Develop work skills and behaviors needed to work in a semi-supervised employment situation;
- Develop the necessary work skills for an ongoing supported work environment.

***After long-range goals have been determined, ask the following questions to assess your needs and identify the activities that will be necessary to include in the transition planning in order to achieve these long-range goals:***

Do you have the skills necessary to obtain competitive employment?

Will you need some support to obtain or maintain employment?

Are you aware of the possible options regarding work?

Have your interests and abilities been assessed (*vocational assessment*) and discussed?

Have you had any work experience?

Are you taking appropriate career-related (*either vocational or college-bound*) courses?

Do you have good social skills appropriate for the job and living in the community?

Have you contacted agencies outside the school system that may be able to assist with long-range goals? Agencies such as Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), Department of Mental Retardation (DMR), Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB), or the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI) may be appropriate. Refer to pages 28-30 for phone numbers.

# Post-Secondary Education/Employment Checklist

*Ask Yourself:* What services do I need to learn more about?  
What skills do I need to help me reach my long-term goals?

**Please Check All That Apply**



## **Post-Secondary Education/Training**

*You need to ask about opportunities for education/training after exiting high school.*

- \*Workforce Investment Act \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Community College (2 year school) \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Business/Trade School \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Adult Education \_\_\_\_\_
- \*College or University (4 year school) \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Apprenticeship \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Military \_\_\_\_\_

## **Employment**

*These activities can help you find out what you can do best.*

- \*Vocational Assessment (identifies current strengths) \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Student/Parent Interview \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Student's Self Assessment \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Formal Assessment \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Situational Assessment \_\_\_\_\_

## **School and Work-Based Training and Preparation**

*These skills can help you obtain and keep a job.*

- \*Application Completion \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Resume Writing \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Interviewing Skills \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Job Search Skills \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Interpersonal Communication Skills with Supervisor and Co-Workers \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Time Management \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Appropriate Dress \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Safety Rules \_\_\_\_\_

(continued on next page)

(continued)

**Work Experiences**

*These activities can help you find out about different jobs, what you enjoy doing, and how to find and maintain a job.*

- \*In School Job \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Job Shadowing \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Volunteer Work \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Work Study \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Summer Job \_\_\_\_\_

**Career Guidance Services**

*These activities can help identify where your talents might fit. (School Transition Coordinators and State Job Centers can provide these services.)*

- \*Counselor Services \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Access to computerized career information \_\_\_\_\_

**Employment Support Services**

*These services are available to help you learn to do a job successfully.*

- \*Work Crew \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Support on the Job \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Transitional Employment \_\_\_\_\_

**Career Related Courses**

*Your plans will require certain courses in school to help you reach your goals.*

- \*Vocational/Technical \_\_\_\_\_
- \*College-Bound \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Computer Literacy \_\_\_\_\_

**Adult Service Agencies**

*You may be eligible for help from one of these agencies.*

- \*Bureau of Rehabilitation Services \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Board of Education and Services for the Blind \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Department of Mental Retardation \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Private Providers \_\_\_\_\_

Use page 22 to help you write your transition objectives/activities in the area of Post-Secondary Education/Employment.

# *Thinking About Independent Living and Transition Goals*

***Long-range goals written into your IEP regarding INDEPENDENT LIVING might include statements such as:***

- Learn to understand your disability;
- Develop the necessary skills to make independent decisions;
- Develop the ability to take care of your personal needs without help from others;
- Be able to manage your personal needs utilizing necessary supports;
- Develop the necessary skills to live in a supervised apartment or a group home;
- Maximize your ability to function independently within your family environment.

***After long-range goals have been determined, ask the following questions to assess your needs and identify the activities that will be necessary to include in the transition planning in order to achieve these long-range goals:***

Do you have opportunities to make choices and decisions at school and at home?

Have you and your family received information about residential alternatives?

Have you had an opportunity to visit any locations in your community?

Do you have the skills to be self-supporting in your home? If not, what skills do you need to learn?

Will you need help in some of the decision-making?

Do you have independent living skills, such as cooking, shopping, and cleaning?

Do you require an assistant to help you with personal needs?

Do you have a special transportation need? How will this need be met beyond high school?

If respite care will be an issue, has DMR or other adult agencies or sources been contacted?

Do you need assistance in handling money?

Have you been given information about financial assistance that may be available to you, such as Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, or State Supplement for People with Disabilities?

# Independent Living Checklist

Please Check All That Apply



## **Life Skills**

*These are some of the skills you will need to learn so that you can live on your own.*

- \*Cooking \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Cleaning \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Shopping \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Personal Hygiene \_\_\_\_\_

## **Transportation**

*Knowing how to find and use suitable transportation can help you be more independent.*

- \*Independent – walk or ride with others, drive your own car \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Public – bus, train \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Specialized – private vehicle, wheelchair accessible \_\_\_\_\_

## **Self-Advocacy**

*This information can help you have confidence if you need to ask for help.*

- \*Knowing your rights and responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Understanding your disability \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Knowledge of the resource help available \_\_\_\_\_

## **Medical and Support Services**

*These services can enable you to live successfully on your own.*

- \*Access to Health Services \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Counseling \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Personal Care Services \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Adaptive Equipment \_\_\_\_\_

## **Financial Management**

*Learning about the ways to take care of your money and your bills is an essential part of being an adult.*

- \*Managing a Bank Account \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Supplemental Security Income (SSI) \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Public Assistance Services \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Insurance \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Guardianship, Wills, and Trusts \_\_\_\_\_

Use page 23 to help you write your transition objectives/activities in the area of Independent Living.

# *Thinking About Community Participation and Transition Goals*

***Long-range goals written into your IEP regarding COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION might include statements such as:***

- Develop the necessary skills to live within the community and access the available resources;
- Develop the ability to utilize recreational/leisure resources in the community independently or with support services;
- Develop the necessary skills and abilities to advocate for my own rights;
- Develop the necessary skills to be a good citizen.

***After long-range goals have been determined, ask the following questions to assess your needs and identify the activities that will be necessary to include in the transition planning in order to achieve these long-range goals:***

- How do you spend your leisure time? Alone? With family? With friends?
- What sports, games, or hobbies do you enjoy?
- Is there anything you wish you could learn to do?
- Do you make friends easily?
- Do you need help in letting people know about your needs?
- Do you find it hard to ask for help?
- Can you use a telephone?
- Can you read a map, bus, or train schedule?

Are there any school or community activities that you would like to get involved in?

# Community Participation Checklist

What help do you need to reach your long-term goals?

Please Check All That Apply



## ***Leisure/Recreation***

Find out about opportunities for fun in your community.

- Sports and Social Clubs \_\_\_\_\_
- Community Programs \_\_\_\_\_
- Specialized Recreation \_\_\_\_\_
- Special Interest Clubs \_\_\_\_\_
- Synagogue/Temple/Church Groups \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Civic Responsibilities***

Find out what you can do to improve the quality of life in your community.

- Political Groups \_\_\_\_\_
- Advocacy Groups \_\_\_\_\_
- Civic/Neighborhood Groups \_\_\_\_\_
- Volunteer Opportunities \_\_\_\_\_

Use page 23 to help you write your transition objectives/activities  
in the area of Community Participation.

# *My Transition Goals*

My goal for **Post-Secondary Education** is:

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The objectives/activities I need to have included in my **IEP** to help me reach this goal are:

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My goal for **Post-Secondary Employment** is:

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The objectives/activities I need to have included in my **IEP** to help me reach this goal are:

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Please bring this book to your PPT meeting and copy these pages for members of your PPT.

# *My Transition Goals*

My goal for ***Independent Living*** is:

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The objectives/activities I need to have included in my **IEP** to help me reach this goal are:

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My goal for ***Community Participation*** is:

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The objectives/activities I need to have included in my **IEP** to help me reach this goal are:

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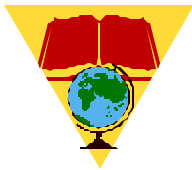
Please bring this book to your PPT meeting and copy these pages for members of your PPT.

# *Planning for the Future: Person-Centered Planning*

As a person with a disability, you may need help in planning for your future. Making decisions about school, training, work, where to live, what to do with one's free time and how to make and keep friends, are easier with the support of family, friends and professionals.

**A Circle of Support** is a coming together of a group of people who are your family, friends, neighbors, teachers, and helpers to act as a community of support around you and your disability. They enable you to identify and accomplish your dreams and goals. A Circle is formed when you or members of your family ask for help. With the assistance of a facilitator, the Circle comes together to brainstorm and focus upon your dreams for the future. Short-term and long-range goals are developed to fulfill those dreams. The group consists **ONLY** of individuals selected by you.

Everyone has **DREAMS!** The Circle comes together to brainstorm and share ideas that will help your dreams come true. There are several planning tools that may be used to structure these Circle meetings. MAPS and PATH are two person-centered planning models used to chart your future beyond the high school years.



## *MAPS*

### *McGill Action Planning System*

This tool helps the Circle identify your strengths, abilities, and interests. Eight key questions are raised that are critical to the planning process. With honesty, creativity, and a positive approach, MAPS will provide the Circle with an action plan that will help you achieve a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment in many life activities.



## *PATH*

### *Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope*

This tool also helps identify your dreams and goals. Literally, this model provides a “path” for the Circle to follow. Comprised of eight steps, the completed process enables the Circle to identify goals and implement action plans to be completed within specified time periods. Similar to MAPS, this tool focuses on your positive attributes and dreams to meaningfully participate in work and community life. Ask your Transition Specialist for more information about MAPS and PATH.

# *Vocational Assessment: Developing a Student Profile*



An effective vocational assessment provides a highly individualized and comprehensive account of the “whole” person and what is truly important to you.

What are your abilities, interests, and preferences? Are supports needed to obtain/maintain employment? What is your learning style? These questions are answered by pulling together information obtained from teachers, professionals, parents/guardians, and you.

A vocational assessment paints the big picture of who you really are and includes such information as academic and medical records, psychological testing, vocational reports, and situational assessments of experiences in the community.

Vocational Assessment, along with Person-Centered Planning, are integral parts of your transition planning. They form the foundation of your plan for your future in the areas of work, training, education, leisure, and independent living.

## *Supported Employment*

Supported Employment may offer you the opportunity to work by providing:

- On-the-job training;
- Supports to get/keep a meaningful job.

Supported Employment offers you the opportunity to work by providing:

- A REAL job in the community, working alongside co-workers without disabilities;
- A PAID job;
- An OPTION, even if you have limited or NO work history;
- A job that is related to your STRENGTHS, ABILITIES, AND INTERESTS.

# *Health Care and Residential Options*

## *Health Care*

As you become ready to leave school, it is important to take responsibility, as far as you are able, for your personal health care. You and your parent(s) or legal guardian must decide what health related skills you have and in what areas you will need help. You should also be able to identify the places and people in your community where health services can be found, including medical clinics and doctors and dentist offices. Transition planning in the health area should include self-advocacy, sexuality, reproductive health care, and how you will pay for needed services.

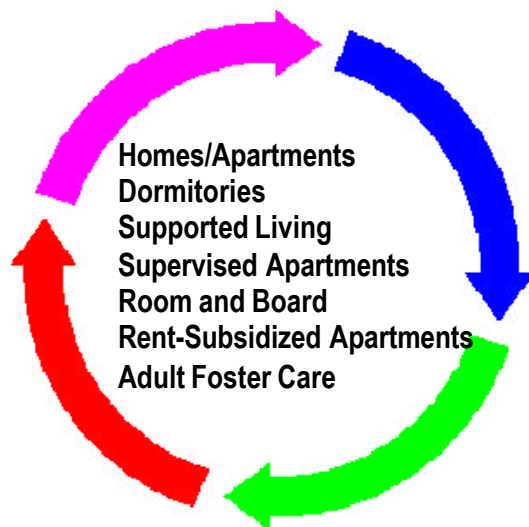
## *Residential Options*

Where you live as an adult depends on two things:

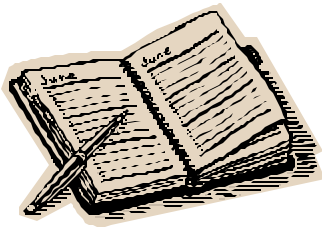
1. How well you are able to live and support yourself;
2. Your personal preferences as to where and how you want to live.

It is very important for you and your parent(s) or guardian to be aware of the kinds of living situations that may be available for you in your community.

**Visit and get to know some of these places:**



There are only a small number of supported residential living arrangements in the State of Connecticut. If you are interested in, AND ELIGIBLE for, this type of living situation, it is very important to contact the agencies LONG BEFORE you need a place to live. These things take time to plan. Consider living options at least two years BEFORE you plan to exit from your secondary education or when an outside agency linkage is made. You must work with the appropriate adult agencies to determine if you are eligible. Refer to pages 28 & 29 for a list of adult agencies.



# Record-Keeping

Records are very important when planning your transition from school to life as an adult after graduation. Keep track of what your parents, you, and the school have agreed to, have actually done, and have left to do.

Depending on your future goals, each educational institution, support service, or program applied to will require a variety of information. Having this information within reach for quick responding will make the transition that much easier and less stressful.

## **Request copies of and keep in a file:**

- all high school transcripts;
- evaluations, tests, and therapists' reports;
- on-the-job training reports and work experiences.



Request letters of recommendation from employers or any agencies where you've done volunteer work.

Build a section of files on your work/school goals.

## **When researching schools, employment, private agency support providers, or state agency referrals:**

- create folders for each agency, school, or employer contacted;
- keep accurate, dated notes of every conversation with agency personnel;
- keep copies of any letters you write to an agency and all letters received from the agencies;
- file brochures, handouts, guidelines, and copies of any applications by agency name and indicate the date somewhere on the material; have the contact person's name, address, and phone number on the outside of the file for easy reference or maintain a special contact list;
- maintain a dated "to do" list of responses, follow-ups, and agency deadlines, and check it periodically.

Always save these files and keep them up to date. Goals may change after leaving school, but the information in the files will be important throughout your life.

# *Agencies Providing Services for Adults with Disabilities*

The following is a list of agencies that provide services to adults, and in some cases children, with disabilities. Each agency has criteria that will determine whether or not a person is eligible for their services. It is worth making a call if you think you may qualify for some of the services.

## **Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS):**

***The Connecticut Department of Social Services*** administers a range of services and programs through bureaus and agencies with local offices throughout the state. The central office of DSS is located at 25 Sigourney Street, Hartford, CT 06106. The toll free telephone number is 1-800-842-1508.

## **The following is a list of some of the DSS agencies/programs you may find helpful:**

***Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)*** provides services to assist persons with physical and/or mental disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. BRS can provide individualized services to eligible persons that may include vocational assessment, guidance and training, career education and on-the-job training, supported employment services, and rehabilitation technology services. The central office of BRS is located at 25 Sigourney Street, 11<sup>th</sup> floor, Hartford, CT 06106. The toll free telephone number is 1-800-537-2549, or call 860-424-4844. Inquire as to the telephone number of your local BRS office.

***Independent Living Centers (ILC's)*** assist persons with physical and/or mental disabilities to live independently in their communities. This program is administered by BRS and services are provided through five Independent Living Centers. These services may include assistance in obtaining modifications to a home or vehicle, adaptive equipment, personal care assistance, advocacy, peer counseling, and independent living skills training. The locations of and contact numbers for the Independent Living Centers are listed on page 31.

***Adult Services*** can provide services to income eligible people with physical or mental disabilities, ages 18-64, who need supportive home care or social work services to live independently in the community. In addition to counseling and advocacy, paid services, such as housekeeping, home delivered meals, and emergency response services, may be available. Call the central office of DSS to find your local office.

***Personal Care Assistance*** provides annual grants that are made available to help people with severe disabilities to become and/or remain employed. These grants enable clients to employ personal care assistants to help them with daily activities. Social work services are also provided. For additional information, contact the central office of DSS.

***Medicaid*** provides health insurance for persons who meet eligibility criteria. To get additional information, contact the central office of DSS, or call your local DSS office.

# Agencies Providing Services for Adults with Disabilities

(continued)



## Other State Agencies:

**Department of Mental Retardation (DMR)** provides and funds a wide array of services for people with mental retardation. To find the office nearest you, look in the blue pages of the phone book under “State of Connecticut, Department of Mental Retardation”, or contact the central office located at 450 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106, or call them at (860) 418-6000.

**Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)** provides and funds an array of services for people with mental illness. To find the office nearest you, look in the blue pages of the phone book under “State of Connecticut, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services”, or contact the central office located at 410 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106, or call them at (860) 418-7000.

**Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (P&A)** advocates for the civil rights of people with disabilities and provides assistance and information to people who have trouble finding services or are not satisfied with the services they receive. They are located at 60B Weston Street, Hartford, CT 06120, or call them at (860) 297-4300 or (860) 566-2102 (V/TDD) or toll free at (800) 842-7303.

**Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)** provides and coordinates services to assist people who are legally blind to obtain and retain employment. A myriad of services, including vocational training, adaptive technology, mobility instruction, independent living skills training, supported employment, and on-the-job training services, are offered to eligible consumers. The main office is located at 184 Windsor Avenue, Windsor, CT 06095. More information is available by calling (860) 602-4000 or (800) 842-4510.

## Federally Funded Programs:

### **Social Security Administration**

For more information about SSI, SSDI, Work Incentives, or Medicare, contact the Social Security Administration toll free at (800) 772-1213 or (800) 325-0778 (V/TDD).

## *Other Organizations That Can Help*

The organizations listed below can help you find services you may need or people who can help you. Some have materials that can give you an understanding of the laws and can expand your knowledge about moving from school to adult life.

**Connecticut Children's Medical Center Out Patient Center** ..... (860) 545-8600  
Clinic provides evaluations of need for physical adaptive equipment.

**Center for Adaptive Technology, Southern CT State University** ..... (203) 392-5799  
Finds solutions for people with disabilities who wish to increase their access to computers.

**African Caribbean American Parents (AFCAMP)** ..... (860) 297-4358  
Provides resources, support, and advocacy for African American/Caribbean families of children with disabilities.

**A.J. Pappanikou Center for Disability Studies** ..... (860) 486-5035  
Develops and disseminates models for supporting individuals with disabilities in their communities.

**ARC of Connecticut (Association for Retarded Citizens)** ..... (860) 953-8335  
Promotes general welfare of persons with disabilities through education, advocacy, and direct service.

**Atypical PDD – Asperger's Support Group, Inc.** ..... (203) 924-0457  
Provides programs and information pertaining to the complete autism spectrum that includes PDD-NOS and Asperger Syndrome.

**Autism Society of Connecticut** ..... (203) 235-7629  
Promotes general welfare of persons with autism through information, advocacy, and support services.

**Bureau of Special Education/Pupil Services,  
CT State Department of Education** ..... (860) 807-2025  
Provides technical assistance to schools and parents about special education services, programs, and rights under federal and state law.

**Commission on the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired** ..... (860) 566-7414  
Provides advocacy, support, and direct services to persons who are deaf or hearing-impaired.

**National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of CT (CAMI)** ..... (800) 215-3021  
Educates, informs, and advocates for families of persons with mental illness and offers family support groups.

**Connecticut Association for Children and Adults  
with Learning Disabilities (CACLD)** ..... (203) 838-5010  
Provides advocacy, information, support, referral, and consultation services for children and adults with learning disabilities and/or attention deficits.

**Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities** ..... (860) 418-6160  
Promotes the full inclusion of all people with disabilities in community life.

**Brain Injury Association of Connecticut (BLAC)** ..... (860) 721-8111 or (800) 278-8242  
Provides case consultation, referral, and advocacy to CT residents with brain injuries.

## *Other Organizations That Can Help*

(continued)

- Connecticut Autism Spectrum Resource Center** ..... (203) 272-7529  
A statewide advocacy, assistance, support, resource, and training center for families of children with Pervasive Developmental Disorders.
- Connecticut Community Providers Association** ..... (860) 257-7909  
Assists agencies to provide rehabilitation and community-based mental health services for people with disabilities.
- Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress** ..... (860) 257-8882  
Offers information on Down Syndrome, and makes referrals to local and state programs.
- Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC)** ..... (860) 739-3089 or (800) 445-CPAC  
Offers information on rights and procedures to parents of children with disabilities.
- Easter Seal Society of Connecticut** ..... (860) 228-9438 or (800) 874-7687  
Offers advocacy and public education services concerning disability issues.
- Independent Living Centers:**  
Provide variety of services to empower people with disabilities to live as independently as possible, and to become self-advocates.
- Center for Disability Rights ~ New Haven Region** ..... (203) 934-7077  
**Disabilities Resources Center of Fairfield County** ..... (203) 378-6977  
**Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut (DNEC)~ North Franklin Region** ..... (860) 823-1898  
**Independence Northwest ~ Naugatuck Region** ..... (203) 729-3299  
**Independence Unlimited ~ Hartford Region** ..... (203) 523-5021
- Infoline** ..... 211  
Telephone information and referral service, publishes community resources directory.
- Learning Disabilities Association of Connecticut (LDA of CT)** ..... (860) 560-1711  
Provides information, referral, and advocacy to persons affected by learning disabilities.
- Mental Health Association of Connecticut** ..... (860) 529-1970 or (800) 842-1501  
Promotes prevention of mental illness, and improved care and treatment of persons with mental illness.
- Padres Abriendo Puertas** ..... (800) 842-7303  
Provides resources, support, and advocacy for Latino families of children with disabilities.
- Rehabilitation Engineering Associates** ..... (800) 485-5040  
Provides technical assistance to persons with disabilities.
- SERC (Special Education Resource Center)** ..... (860) 632-1485  
Provides professional development, technical assistance, and information resources for Connecticut's educators and the families they serve.
- United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Hartford** ..... (860) 236-6201  
Serves the needs of persons with cerebral palsy and other severe disabilities.

# *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Transition*

## **Transition: An In-Depth Review of the Federal Mandate**

**IDEA** affirms the right of children with specific disabilities, ages 3-21, to a free appropriate individualized program including transition services.

Public Law 101-476, the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**, was enacted in 1990 by Congress with a transition amendment that required transition services for students with disabilities as they prepare to complete school and move into adult life. In June 1997, the **IDEA** was amended as Public Law 105-17 to include additional provisions for transition.

The 1990 IDEA amendment specifies that students' Individual Education Programs (IEPs) must include "a statement of the needed transition services for students beginning no later than age 16 and annually thereafter, including when appropriate, a statement of the inter-agency responsibilities or linkages (or both) before the student leaves the school setting". Connecticut regulations require these services to begin at age 15. The 1997 IDEA amendment specifies that schools now must begin to look at appropriate courses of study needed for future transition when students with disabilities reach age 14 (usually at high school entrance).

**It is critical that students with disabilities and their families take the time to plan for life after high school. The public school system plays an important role in assisting the student to gain the skills required to reach the goals of his/her plan. The transition services requirements mandated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) recognize the responsibility schools have in this planning.**

## **Definition of Transition Services Sec. 602(30) 20 USC 1401\***

"Transition services means a **coordinated set of activities** for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation."

The **coordinated set of activities** must:

- 1) Be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and
- 2) Include:
  - instruction;
  - community experiences;
  - the development of employment and other post-high school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills, and functional vocational evaluation.

# *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Transition*

(continued)

**IDEA** requires that goals and objectives be developed in each of these areas, as part of the IEP, and that the student and family participate in the planning process. In Connecticut, this means that the student must be invited to the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting.

At age 18, educational rights of the parents transfer to the student. Both parents and student must be informed of this transfer at least one year prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Arrangements can be made if the student is not capable of making independent decisions.

A student's eligibility for special education services ends when the student graduates from high school or at the end of the school year in which the student reaches age 21, whichever happens first.

However, before the student can graduate from high school, the PPT must evaluate the student and determine whether the student continues to require special education. If the PPT determines that the student no longer needs special education and will graduate, the school must notify the student's parent(s) (and the student if he/she is at least 18 years old), that the student will be graduating and that as a result, special education services will end upon graduation. The school must also provide information to the parent(s) and student regarding action that can be taken if either disagrees with the PPT's decision. If a due process hearing is requested, the school must continue to provide all IEP services to the student until it is determined otherwise through the hearing process.

## **Failure to Meet Transition Objectives Sec. 14 20 USC 1414\***

As further protection, the federal law states that if a participating agency, other than the local public school district, fails to provide the transition services described in the IEP, the school shall reconvene the IEP team (in Connecticut, the PPT) to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives for the student.

Additional information about transition requirements is available from the CT State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education/Pupil Services at (860) 807-2020.

\*The above numbers are citations from the Public Law 105-17, IDEA Amendments of 1997, for reference purposes.

## *Due Process Overview\* and Transition*

If you disagree with goals and objectives for transition that have been proposed on the IEP for your son or daughter, you have the right to a due process proceeding under special education law. Due process procedures may be initiated by a parent/guardian or the school district when they cannot reach an agreement with respect to any matter relating to the proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or education placement of the student, or the provision of a free and appropriate public education. Due Process procedures include: Mediation, Advisory Opinion, and Hearings.

**Mediation** is an optional process for resolving disagreements where a mediator appointed by the Connecticut State Department of Education meets with the parent(s)/guardian and school personnel to try to work out a solution that is acceptable to both parties. The parent(s)/guardian and the school district may request mediation by sending a letter to the Due Process Unit of the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, and Pupil Services, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457. A mediation will be held within thirty (30) calendar days after the receipt of the request for mediation. If the disagreement is not resolved, the parties may seek an advisory opinion or may proceed to an impartial hearing.

**Advisory Opinion** requires that both parties (the parent(s)/guardian and the school district) agree to participate. Both parties have an hour to present their case, through witnesses and documents, to a hearing officer who will then issue a brief, oral, non-binding opinion. Participants may assess their respective positions and decide to settle the case or proceed to a full hearing with a different hearing officer presiding over the case.

**Hearings** are held before an impartial hearing officer who will provide the parent(s)/guardian and school district with the opportunity to present evidence through documents and witnesses. A decision will be rendered and mailed within forty-five (45) calendar days of the initial request for due process.

A telephone pre-hearing conference will be held at least ten (10) calendar days before the hearing to identify issues that either party intends to place before the hearing officer. Through the pre-hearing conference, the parent(s) and the school district will be provided with an opportunity to resolve the issues in dispute, if possible, and narrow the scope of the issues.

(continued on next page)

# *Due Process Overview\* and Transition*

(continued)

Parent(s)/guardian have the right to:

- Be accompanied and advised by counsel and by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the issues of a student with a disability;
- Be informed by the school system of any free or low-cost legal and other relevant services available in the area;
- Have the student who is the subject of the hearing be present;
- Open the hearing to the public;
- Have the hearing scheduled at a time and place which is reasonably convenient to the parent(s)/guardian and the student.

The decision of the hearing is final and legally binding unless the parent(s)/guardian or school district brings the decision to either the State Superior Court or Federal District Court for a review.



\*A detailed explanation can be found in:

**Resource Booklet for Parents of Children with Special Needs** which is available from:

Special Education Resource Center (SERC)  
25 Industrial Park Road  
Middletown, CT 06457-1520  
(860) 632-1485, ext. 263 or 250

\*\*A copy of the full text of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is also available through SERC.



# *Federal Disability Laws*

## **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The landmark 1990 civil rights law protects persons with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, state and local government services, telecommunications, and transportation. Title I deals with employment and covers all private and public employers with 15 or more workers. It protects any person with a disability who, with or without “reasonable accommodations”, can perform the “essential functions” of a job.

Title III applies to public accommodations, including commercial facilities and places of private education. It covers examinations and courses related to licensing and obtaining credentials for educational, professional, or trade purposes.

## **Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by agencies, institutions, and contractors who receive any funding from the Federal Government, as well as the Executive branch of the Federal Government and the US Postal Service. Most schools, colleges, and universities are included. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and subsequent reauthorizations, also funds state vocational rehabilitation agencies and centers for independent living.

Copies of the above laws may be obtained from the CT State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services, (860) 807-2025.

For answers to your questions regarding these laws, contact the Office of Protection and Advocacy at (860) 297-4300.

# *How Can Parents Help with Transition?*

There are many ways that parents/guardians can help to make sure that their child's transition is as smooth as possible. The following are some guidelines:

1. Set realistic goals. Include your son or daughter in setting goals for the future and make sure that the school program prepares him/her to meet those goals. All students need to gain as many independent work and living skills as possible.
2. Encourage gradual independence. Parents are not always going to be around. Begin now to encourage independent travel, self-care activities, money management, and decision-making. A person with disabilities may always need support, but each task/activity that he or she can do alone is a great gain and one less thing that someone else will have to be paid to do for him or her one day.
3. Gather information about issues such as guardianship, sex education and sexual responsibility, and driving. Decisions about these matters will have to be made based upon the person's level of independence and competency, the family's values, and the resources available to help with each issue.
4. Familiarize yourself with the adult service system. Parents/guardians need to become informed about the available programs and the entrance criteria for each one. Getting a person's name on the appropriate waiting list is sometimes of critical importance.
5. Build self-esteem. Act as though you expect your son or daughter to have a future. Teach him or her skills that you would teach any child who is getting ready to go out into the world: how to do laundry, make a simple meal, and sew on a button. Because you have confidence, he or she will have confidence too.

(continued on next page)

# *How Can Parents Help with Transition?*

(continued)

6. Encourage social integration. Everyone needs friends. Young people with disabilities cannot afford to be isolated from non-disabled persons their age.
7. Provide real experiences. Persons with disabilities need experience in work situations. This should be addressed by the PPT and incorporated into the IEP. Parents/guardians should also look for ways to provide work experiences outside of school.
8. Encourage good grooming and good work habits. Since the person with a disability usually has to overcome a certain amount of prejudice it makes sense for him or her to take particular care to make a good impression by being appropriately dressed and well groomed and be punctual, reliable, and hard-working.
9. Foster the acceptance of criticism. Most teenagers are sensitive to even the mildest criticism. Young people have to learn to cope with the standards of the workplace and with unfair criticism. Practicing acceptable responses to criticism needs to begin early.
10. Provide opportunities to manage money. Teenagers should be paid for the work they do and taught the necessary skills to manage their own money. Gradually, they should be encouraged to do their own shopping using their own money and, those who are able, should begin to do some budgeting as well.

Transition means letting go for families. The issues surrounding transition are complex and loaded with emotional significance. However, the more information that you have, the easier it is for you to make wise decisions.

PEAK Parent Center, Inc. (October, 1992) Parents, let's unite for kids. In D. Ahern – Presbie (Ed.), A curriculum guide for the development of self-determination and advocacy skills (pp. 9-10). Storrs, CT: The A.J. Pappanikou Center on Special Education and Rehabilitation: A University Affiliated Program.

# *More For Parents*

## **Guardianship:**

In Connecticut, when a student turns 18 years old, they are considered to be an adult even if they have a physical or mental disability. If the student is not able to make important legal or everyday decisions about their life, they may need what is called a **legal guardian**. A **legal guardian** is an adult who a judge has said can make important decisions for a person with a disability. People who make good **legal guardians** are parents, brothers, sisters, other relatives, or any other adult who cares about the individual. Because someone is not automatically chosen to become a **legal guardian**, they must ask a **probate court judge** to appoint them as guardian. This should be done before the student becomes 18 years old.

## **Estate Planning:**

How will your child support themselves as an adult on their own? That is a very important question that many young people with disabilities and their parents/guardians worry about. Some people who have disabilities may be eligible for what is called Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSI is money that is paid to a person who, because of their disability, cannot work enough to support their everyday needs. Unfortunately, how much financial help the person is receiving from other people affects the amount of SSI money received. If an individual receives money from a parent or other resource, their SSI money may be adjusted. Before an individual turns 18 years old, it is important to get accurate information and advice about SSI. For details about SSI, call your local Social Security Administration Office. The telephone number can be found on page 29. Accountants and lawyers specializing in Special Education may also be helpful.

# *Student Rights and Responsibilities Bookmark upon reaching the Age of Majority*

## **Student Rights**

**I** have the right to know what my disability is and how it affects my ability to learn, live independently, and be part of a life-long learning system.

**I** have the right to be provided information regarding assessment, services, and Individual Education planning in a language format that I understand.

**I** have the right to have individuals who understand my disability serve on my IEP team (in Connecticut, PPT).

**I** have the right to accept or refuse services.

**I** have the right to disagree with my IEP and receive help in writing a complaint, requesting mediation, or a due process hearing.

## **Student Responsibilities**

**It** is my responsibility to ask questions, request help, seek self-advocacy training, and peer support so that I can learn about my disability and advocate for my needs.

**It** is my responsibility to ask questions until I understand the presented information clearly.

**It** is my responsibility to attend all meetings and actively participate in my lifework plan.

**It** is my responsibility to invite people (i.e., friend, parent, grandparent, coach, teacher) who trust and know me well.

**It** is my responsibility to understand that refusing services may affect my school/work program, and that I may not get these services back.

**It** is my responsibility to follow through and be cooperative with any process I request.

# *The Importance of Transition Planning*

We hope this manual has helped you and your family understand the importance of Transition Planning. We hope it has provided a road map that will guide you through each step.

## **LET YOUR WISHES BE KNOWN !!**

- Dream
- Investigate
- Learn
- Plan



## **DON'T GIVE UP!**

Your transition goals will help you in “***BUILDING A BRIDGE***” from high school into the adult world!



The information in this manual is copyright free, unless otherwise noted. Readers are encouraged to copy and share it, but please credit *Building a Bridge*, Connecticut Transition Task Force, Parent-Student Subcommittee. Please share your ideas and feedback about this transition manual with our committee by contacting (860) 632-1485 ext. 317 or 268, or (860) 807-2020, or by completing the satisfaction survey located in the back of this manual.

# Transition Related Web Sites



Resources for Supporting High School Students with Disabilities  
[www.transitionlink.com](http://www.transitionlink.com)

California's School-to-Career Net  
School-to-Work Opportunities and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) & School-to-Work  
[www.stc.cahwnet.gov](http://www.stc.cahwnet.gov)

Council for Exceptional Children,  
Division on Career Development and Transition  
[www.ed.uiuc.edu/SPED/dcdt/](http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/SPED/dcdt/)

LD Online  
[www.ldonline.org/ld\\_indepth/transition/transition.html](http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/transition/transition.html)

National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE)  
[vocserve.berkeley.edu/](http://vocserve.berkeley.edu/)

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)  
[www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC)  
[www.noicc.gov](http://www.noicc.gov)

The Self-Determination Bulletin: Common Sense  
[www.self-determination.org](http://www.self-determination.org)

National Organization on Disability  
[www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org)

Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights  
[www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

National Transition Alliance for Youth with Disabilities  
[www.dssc.org/nta/html/home.htm](http://www.dssc.org/nta/html/home.htm)

National Transition Network  
[ici2.coled.umn.edu/ntn/](http://ici2.coled.umn.edu/ntn/)

Pennsylvania School-to-Work Online Research Center  
[www.outreach.psu.edu/PASTW](http://www.outreach.psu.edu/PASTW)

National School-to-Work Learning & Information Center  
[www.stw.ed.gov](http://www.stw.ed.gov)

Western Regional Resource Center  
[interact.uoregon.edu/wrrc/wrrc.html](http://interact.uoregon.edu/wrrc/wrrc.html)

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Support, Virginia Commonwealth University  
[www.worksupport.com](http://www.worksupport.com)

# *Glossary of Abbreviations*

**ADA** – Americans with Disabilities Act

**BESB** – Board of Education and Services for the Blind \*

**BRS** – Bureau of Rehabilitation Services \*

**CDHI** – Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired \*

**DMHAS** – Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services \*

**DMR** – Department of Mental Retardation \*

**DSS** – Department of Social Services \*

**IDEA** – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**ILC's** – Independent Living Centers

**IEP** – Individualized Education Program

**MAPS** – McGill Action Planning System

**P & A** – Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities \*

**PATH** – Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope

**PPT** – Planning and Placement Team

**SSA** – Social Security Administration

**SSDI** – Social Security Disability Income

**SSI** – Supplemental Security Income

\* Connecticut State Agency

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# *Building a Bridge Satisfaction Survey*

Please take a few moments and complete this form. Your input will help make future editions even better for other students with disabilities and their families.

**Check (✓) your current position.**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Transition Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Educator \_\_\_\_\_ Administrator \_\_\_\_\_ Non-profit Organization Staff \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (please specify position) \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you obtain this manual?**

School \_\_\_\_\_ Non-profit Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Friend \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Did you attend/participate in the PPT meeting to develop the IEP goals for transition?** \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

**Did you complete the checklists and worksheets in this training manual and bring them to the PPT meeting to help develop goals and objectives on the IEP?** \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

**How useful was this manual in helping you prepare for the PPT meeting and developing goals for transition?**

(A) Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ (B) Above Average \_\_\_\_\_ (C) Average \_\_\_\_\_  
(D) Fair \_\_\_\_\_ (F) Poor \_\_\_\_\_

**Did you receive any help in using Building A Bridge manual to develop transition goals? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No**  
**If yes, who helped you?**

**What changes (additions and/or deletions) would you suggest be made to this training manual?**

**Other Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your input.

Please mail this survey to **Transition Initiative**, SERC, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457-1520.  
I would like to be placed on SERC's mailing list and receive information about activities for families and professionals.  
If you are a student with a disability in transition, please put your name, mailing address, and phone number on the reverse side.

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# Notes

