



Informing Families ...Today and Tomorrow

A project of the Washington State DD Council

Preparing for a Meaningful Life After High School

Make the most of the support your family member has during these school years to focus on building independent living skills, employment opportunities, and connections to your community.

Because school-related activities and K-12 education services end after age 21, it is important to learn as much as you can about the road ahead so that you can prepare your family member for a full life after school.

In this special edition newsletter, we offer information and resources to help you do all this, and more, as your family member moves through high school transition years to life as an adult.



IEP Goals for Transition

Although transition planning officially begins at age 16, you can start planning for life after school as early as 14. In fact, many families recommend this as early as possible.

Even with state and federal laws to ensure your family member's right to an education, it's important to speak up, participate in planning, and make sure all goals and objectives are written in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).



If it's not written in the IEP, the school does not have to provide services to support it.

Employment Goals

Be sure to include employment-related goals such as: identifying career interests and abilities; learning self-advocacy and social skills; riding the bus; improving communication; and using assistive technology.

In addition, your family member may want to consider pre-employment services, which provide job exploration and work readiness for students with IEPs and 504 plans ages 16-21—or as young as 14 if included in the IEP.

Pre-employment services are offered by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Talk to your IEP team or *(con't on next page)*

**WHAT'S
NEXT**





(Transition Planning con't)

contact DVR to learn more:
dshs.wa.gov/dvr.

Support Self Advocacy

Create opportunities for your family member to set their goals, make decisions (as well as mistakes!) and learn self advocacy skills.

People first of Washington promotes self advocacy in all areas of a person's life in many parts of the state. They are creating Self Advocacy chapters in high schools. For more information, visit peoplefirstofwashington.org.

As their transition plan is developed, be sure that they are an integral part of the process. Help them become an active participant in IEP meetings. Work with them ahead of time to identify their interests, abilities and goals for school years and beyond.

Include them in filling out My Life Plan, a free online planning tool that asks questions related to every area of life. It's a great way for your family member to participate in voicing their goals and preferences. Visit mylifeplan.guide to get started.

Build Social Connections

Help your young adult identify opportunities to build social connections that will follow them into adulthood. Look for school and community-based clubs where they share a common interest with other students, such as scouting, local recreation programs, and Special Olympics Unified Schools programs (specialolympicswashington.org).

For more ideas and information about transition planning, get our free High School Transition Toolkit at informingfamilies.org/publications.

TRANSFER OF RIGHTS AT 18

At age 18, decision-making authority shifts to the student. The school district will notify the student and parents (or child guardians) when this transfer of rights happens. Prepare for this change by involving your family member in their educational planning from an early age. You can continue to be part of their IEP team at their request.

If there is concern about the student's competency to make informed decisions about their educational services, and they do not have a legal guardian, Washington State law provides a process to have an educational representative appointed for them (WAC 392-172A-05135).

For more information about educational representatives and other alternatives to guardianship, visit informingfamilies.org/alternatives-to-guardianship.



Transition Timeline

► AGES 14-15

- Start planning for the years ahead. Involve the student in setting goals and envisioning their future.

► AGE 16

- Transition services begin.
- Apply for a Washington State ID Card.
- Include self-advocacy & self-determination goals in the IEP.
- Learn what your school's 18-21 transition program(s) offer.
- Determine graduation date.

► AGE 18

- Register to vote.
- Apply to Social Security Administration (SSA) for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Apply for DDA Eligibility. Applications can be made at any age, but it's a really good idea to apply by age 18. (see back page for a list of services). If already a client of DDA, expect notice from your case manager about a re-determination of DDA eligibility.
- Graduate and exit high school OR walk the stage with peers and enroll in High School Transition program until age 21.
- Transition to adult health care providers and coverage.

► AGES 20-21

- Request long-term employment supports from DDA (if funding is available).
- Apply for short-term employment services from DVR (or, if available, your county DD program). Visit dshs.wa.gov/dvr to find your school's DVR Transition Counselor.

Kevin's Law

Beginning life as an adult with inclusion.

by Diana Stadden



High school graduation

ceremonies are a right of passage and a shared celebration of accomplishment that mark the end of childhood years and the entrance to adulthood.

For many years, most students receiving special education services did not get to "walk" with other seniors at the graduation event because they had not completed all the graduation requirements.

Each school district decided whether students receiving special education services could participate in graduation ceremonies or not.

With the passage of House Bill 1050 in 2007, known as "Kevin's Law", students with disabilities who receive special education services now have the right to participate in graduation ceremonies without losing their high school transition services, which start at age 18. State law allows them to complete

any necessary credits or testing in their transition program.

Students, like my son David, who participate in the graduation ceremony but haven't completed the graduation requirements, get a certificate of attendance and receive the official diploma upon completion of transition.

A student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is required to include a Transition Plan by at least age 16. As the student's career interest becomes evident, plans should be designed for a vocational program, college or work toward job placement prior to leaving school at age 21.

It should provide time for any credits/testing needed to get their diploma and ensure a smooth changeover into transition services and then toward the future goals.

My son walked at his graduation ceremony, tried various jobs during

Employment Funding for High School Transition Grads

The budget for the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) includes new employment funding for high school graduate who were born between September 1, 1995 and August 31, 1997, who want to work and are functionally and financially eligible for Community First Choice personal care services (see back page for more about CFC).

Anyone who meets these criteria and requests the service will begin receiving long-term employment services through DDA after graduating and turning 21.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Supports to help gain/ maintain employment. The services are developed based on your interests & abilities and promote career advancement.

his transition program and was connected to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and supported employment services at the end of his transition services.

Kevin's Law has allowed my son and many others to begin their adult life by not being excluded from one of the key events that heralds the beginning of the next chapter in their lives.

Have A Goal?

All young adults need support to lead a life that's meaningful to them.

Getting help from a variety of people and places helps to create a full, inclusive life that's not limited to (or defined by) a service or educational system.

The Star Form is a one page tool that helps kick-start this process with a simple approach to thinking about support to reach goals of any kind: education, career, relationships, health,



recreation...whatever your family member can imagine and dream.

Use it to identify helpful people, community resources, technology and paid services and the individual's own strengths and abilities.

It's a great way to involve your family member in thinking about what they want to achieve and how to get there.

Download a Star Form, and get started today at: informingfamilies.org/star (available in English and Spanish).

Health Care Transitions



Transitioning to life as an adult includes changes in health care providers and coverage. The Child Neurology Foundation has information and tools for transitioning to adult health care. Visit gottransition.org to learn more.

State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Developmental Disabilities Administration
P.O. Box 45310
Olympia, WA 98504-5310

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US POSTAGE PAID
WAS STATE DEPT
OF ENTERPRISE SRVCS
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..... Disability Benefits and Services

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is cash to help aged, blind, and disabled adults or children who have little or no income.

Contact the Social Security Administration to apply for SSI. Call toll-free 1-800-772-1213 or visit online at ssa.gov.

After applying, be sure to call the Social Security Administration monthly to follow up. They will not call you if there are problems with the application.

Individuals on SSI are eligible to receive Apple Health, and may be eligible to receive other Medicaid such as services Community First Choice (CFC).

CFC includes personal care (assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, eating, meal



preparation and housework).

To apply for Apple Health, visit wahealthplanfinder.org.

To apply for CFC, contact your local Developmental Disabilities Administration office (DDA). Visit the Community Living Connections website to find DDA office near you: wacdc.org.

DDA is the state agency that provides case management and supportive services for children and adults with

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Washington State.

Most DDA services are not an entitlement, which means that enrollment is dependent on available funding and openings created as people move or change services.

Typical services available through DDA include long-term supported employment, respite, therapies, assistive technologies, supported living, and independent living skills instruction.

Most of these services are offered through a Home and Community Based waiver program. A waiver is an agreement to receive services in your own community rather than a state institution.

Learn more: visit dshs.wa.gov/dda.