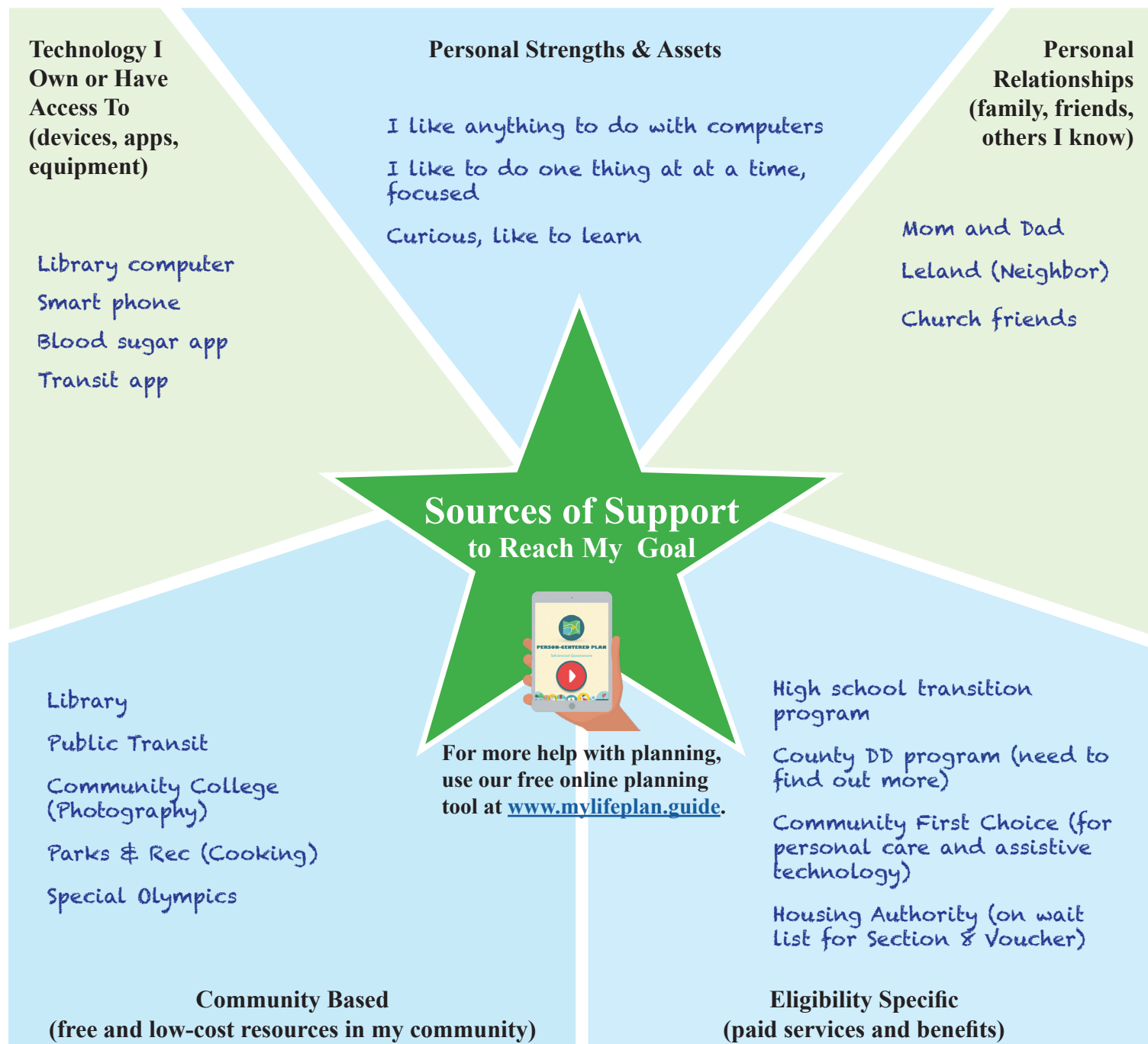




Planning for Life After School

Creating a successful transition to adulthood requires support from a lot of different sources. This Transition Toolkit provides a timeline and checklist to help you make the most of your high school years. The following **STAR FORM** offers an example of ways to identify helpful people and resources to help reach your goals. Download your own **STAR FORM** at informingfamilies.org/star.

Jon's Goal: Successful Transition



Informing Families Today and Tomorrow

Informing Families is a collaboration between the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and other partners throughout the state. We offer trusted news and information that empowers individuals and families to be active participants in planning and creating opportunities to live a full, inclusive life. Sign up here: informingfamilies.org/news.

High School Transition Toolkit

TRANSITION PLANNING 101

Transition is a term educators use to talk about preparing for life after high school, and it spans several years.

Officially, transition planning can begin at age 14, but families and schools should be planning and planting the seed/thoughts/expectations even earlier than that.

By the time your child turns 16, his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP) is focused on transition services.

The transition plan charts a course for graduation and life after high school, with measurable goals related to post-secondary education, employment, independent living, housing, and community participation.



The transition plan is created by the IEP team, with your son/daughter's participation. It identifies the skills, services and supports necessary to reach the student's goals.

It's a lot to consider, but you are not alone. Organizations such as PAVE (wapave.org) and Parent to Parent (arwca.org/getsupport) can help guide your way.

For a list of other high school transition resources and publications, visit: informingfamilies.org.

GOAL SETTING

A transition plan drives the IEP and maps a successful transition to life as an adult. Ask yourself what instruction, support & services are needed to achieve goals related to:



- ▶ **Employment and/or Post Secondary Education**
- ▶ **Independent Living** (e.g., money management, decision-making, shopping, cooking, using the bus)
- ▶ **Housing/In-Home Support**
- ▶ **Social/Recreational**
- ▶ **Financial/Legal**
- ▶ **Health & Safety**



HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION TIMELINE



Include the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Transition Counselor as part of the IEP team at age 14.

- Age 14**
- Transition planning.
 - Include the student in planning.

- Age 15-16**
- Apply for a Washington State ID Card.

- Age 16**
- Begin transition services.
 - Include self-advocacy & self-determination goals in the IEP.
 - Determine graduation date.
 - Learn what the school's 18-21 transition program(s) offer.

- Age 18**
- Register to vote.
 - Open checking account.
 - Apply for SSI benefits.
 - Enroll in Medicaid.
 - Consider decision-making alternatives to guardianship.

- Age 18-19**
- Enroll in High School Transition program until age 21, or continue on to postsecondary education.
 - Assess transportation options.

- Age 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.

IMPORTANT: Apply for DDA Eligibility by Age 18

Applications for eligibility from the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) can be made at any age, but it's a really good idea to apply by age 18. Programs such as Individual & Family Services (IFS) and Community First Choice (CFC) offer a variety of home and community services to increase health, safety, and independence. Learn more: informingfamilies.org/dda-services.

High School Transition Toolkit

TRANSITION CHECKLIST



Consider the following checklist of skills, activities, and services when creating your child's high school transition plan for his/her IEP.

Independent Living

Identify skills and abilities that will help your son or daughter be as independent as possible:

- ☐ Money management/budgeting
- ☐ Opening a line of credit (to establish credit history)
- ☐ Bill paying
- ☐ Decision-making
- ☐ Self-advocacy
- ☐ Sex education
- ☐ Registering to vote
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Transportation training
- ☐ Daily living skills (e.g., cooking, shopping)

Financial and Legal

- ☐ Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- ☐ Arrange for a Representative Payee for SSI benefits (if money management is a concern).
- ☐ Seek benefits planning (including Social Security Work Incentives, such as PASS and IRWE).
- ☐ Establish a special needs trust.
- ☐ Seek guardianship (if less restrictive decision-making alternatives are not appropriate).

Social/Recreational

- ☐ Build friendships outside the family.
- ☐ Create a circle of support (family, friends, neighbors).
- ☐ Identify and connect with groups that share similar interests, such as:
 - Athletic
 - Faith-Based
 - Creative
 - Technological
 - Humanitarian
 - Environmental
 - Civic/Leadership

Employment/Post-Secondary Education

- ☐ Identify potential jobs/careers.
- ☐ Identify personal contacts useful in finding jobs.
- ☐ Research college programs.
- ☐ Gain work experience.
- ☐ Practice job skills.
- ☐ Obtain Assistive Technology and Training.
- ☐ Apply for employment services from DVR (last year of school) and DDA (age 21).

Adult employment services are provided through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). Learn more: informingfamilies.org/employment.

Health & Safety

Identify needed skills and/or resources to be healthy and safe:

- ☐ Emergency recognition and response
- ☐ Personal care/hygiene
- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Healthy relationships
- ☐ Physical/Occupational therapy
- ☐ Adult medical care provider

TIP for IEPs

Talk to the IEP Team about ways to include supports and instruction needed to reach goals that meet the student's needs.

Housing and In-Home Supports

- ☐ Apply for DDA services/supports (e.g., Personal Care, Supported Living, Companion Home, Adult Family Home).
- ☐ Apply for HUD federal housing assistance. (Contact your local Housing Authority to find out how long the waiting list is.)
- ☐ Research home ownership programs for adults with I/DD: washingtonaccessfund.org/home-ownership-resources/

High School Transition Toolkit

GAINING JOB SKILLS in HIGH SCHOOL

SKILLS CENTERS prepare high school juniors and seniors for vocational careers in a wide variety of fields, with hands-on training that's great for students who thrive in a non-traditional learning environment. They're an extension of the student's day (about two and a half hours) and are offered to any local area high school student within a Skills Center's region.

As part of the general education curriculum, they're a great way for students with disabilities to tap into interests and abilities that lead to employment.

Although Skill Centers are staffed by the host school district, it's up to the home high school to provide the necessary supports and accommodations (included in the IEP).

SKILLS CENTER TRAINING AND THE IEP

If your son or daughter is about to become a junior or senior, contact your regional Skills Center and ask to schedule a visit. If you feel your son/daughter would benefit from attending, invite a representative from the Skills Center to be part of the IEP team. The IEP team considers:



- ▶ Is it a good fit?
- ▶ Will the student be successful?
- ▶ Will they find a career as a result of participating?
- ▶ What kinds of support are needed?

If the team agrees that this is a good placement, and the home high school agrees to send the necessary supports/accommodations, then Skills Center training is included in the IEP. As long as s/he remains enrolled in high school, the student can continue to participate in the Skills Center until age 21.

There are currently 18 Skills Centers throughout the state. For a list of locations, visit: washingtonskillscenters.org.

HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION PROGRAMS (AGES 18-21)

When your son/daughter turns 18, they have the option to graduate with their peers (walk the stage) and continue on to a transition program until age 21.



Since DDA employment services do not start until age 21, participating in a transition program makes a lot of sense. Remaining in school until age 21 offers the benefit of a guided transition to adult life, a bridge to adult services, and the development of independent living skills.

Transition programs vary by location. For example, some county DD programs partner with the school district, DVR, and others with the goal of helping students to leave school with a job and make a seamless transition into adult life. Not all counties have funding to provide this type of wraparound service (beyond what DVR offers in schools), so it's important to ask your school what kinds of activities and support its transition program offers. Some schools may even have more than one program to consider.

In addition, your DDA case manager, school DVR counselor and county DD program can provide information on transition and employment services available in your area.



POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION and VOCATIONAL

opportunities exist for all adults, regardless of age or ability. Most community colleges offer courses for credit or audit that enhance employability and life skills. Contact the disability services office at the college you are interested in attending to find out about accommodations and the documentation needed to be eligible for their services. In addition, your high school transition teacher and/or Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) counselor can help you learn more about what college has to offer.

Think College! lists college programs for students with I/DD. If you do not have a program in your area, Think College! provides tips for starting post-secondary education opportunities for students with disabilities. Learn more: thinkcollege.net.