



There are many options to consider and choices to make for youth entering their final years of high school and preparing for adulthood.



## TRANSITION TO ADULT SERVICES

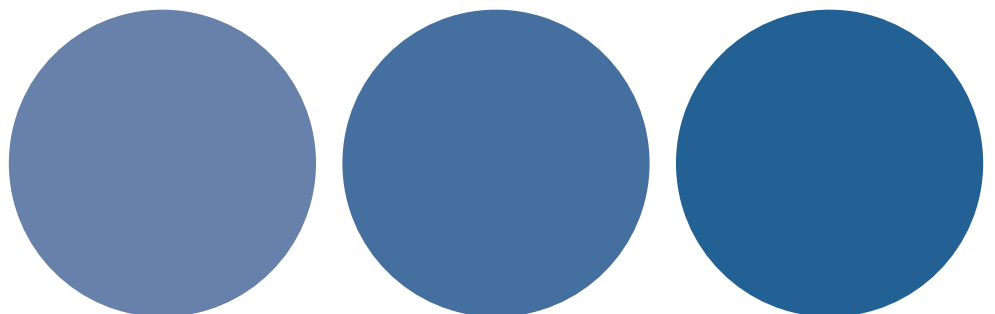
As young adults with developmental disabilities approach the time when they will no longer be eligible for services through the public school system, they begin a process much like their peers: taking stock of their interests and abilities, and making decisions about how they will live their lives as adults.

There are many options to consider and choices to make for youth entering their final years of high school and preparing for adulthood. This is the transition from adolescence to adulthood – from school into the world. School services will be ending and transitions to new living and work environments will develop. The Service Coordinator will have information about available and appropriate local resources, services, and can assist with questions about potential benefits or new responsibilities.

For most parents this time also presents many new challenges and questions about the future. Various options may be confusing. Service Coordinators are trained to support you in making decisions that provide the life envisioned by the person served.

You can use the information here to see what's available, then speak to your Service Coordinator to get started.

Beginning transition



Many supports and services already exist,  
and new options are being developed all the time.



▼  
**planning**

## **New to the Regional Center and Thinking About Life After High School?**

While your child has been in school, you have worked together with the school district for needed educational and related support services. An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) has been guiding your child's academic progress since she or he first began to attend school.

More recently, your child's annual IEP probably included an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) component, in which you identified the knowledge and skills that your child would need to prepare for life after graduation. Regional centers can work with you, the schools, and service providers in the community to help smooth the transition from school, by:

- Helping you and your child learn about the different education, work, recreation, and community living options.
- Suggesting programs that you and your child can visit to see which ones might best meet his or her needs.
- Helping you find funding for that service.

Learn more about options after graduation in this fact sheet.

## **How We Will Get Services and Supports After High School?**

One of the biggest challenges of preparing for life after high school is finding the supports and services you will need after your son or daughter leaves the public school system.

The good news is that many supports and services already exist, and new options are being developed all the time. The goal is to provide support needed to live as active, involved members of the community. Your son or daughter will have opportunities for:

Thinking about and planning for adulthood often begins informally, several years before a person turns 18.



- Self-help and self-care skills
- Continuing his or her education at a university, community college, trade school or specialized training programs
- Paid or volunteer work, with special supports as needed
- Living in his own home or apartment, with or without roommates, and with supports as needed – or living in a licensed group home
- Learning new skills, such as how to manage money, how to get around on the public buses, how to cook, and how to take care of a home
- Socializing with friends and making new friends.

We start planning together as early as possible for a smooth transition.

## **Beginning Transition Planning, Age 14-18**

Thinking about and planning for adulthood often begins informally, several years before a person turns 18. At age 14, the process becomes more formalized.

By age 16, a young person's Individualized Education Program (IEP) will begin to address employment and independent living skills needed for transition to adult living, as well as appropriate educational goals with an Individual Transition Plan. Public educational services will continue to be available for students through age 22 who have not received a diploma. This information will enable the person to plan for transition from school to work, and to achieve the transition outcomes.

Public educational services are still the primary source of services for this age group. The IEP team will help the young person determine what skills are still needed prior to leaving the public educational system.

▶ **getting an early start**

When a student turns 16, the Planning Team will begin to develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) to identify the knowledge, skills and school services that student needs to prepare for life after high school.



**adult responsibilities**

## **Becoming an Adult, Age 18-22**

At age 18, young adults have different responsibilities and benefits that may be available to them. Issues to consider include public benefits, health care decisions, voter registration, selective service registration, living choices, educational or employment decisions and legal rights and responsibilities.

As an adult, the person is able to choose who will help him or her to make decisions in these matters, unless a court has determined that the person is not capable of doing so. Adults may also authorize other adults to be their educational representative.

The young adult will be able to make health care decisions, so understanding his or her health issues becomes more important. A health care directive may be appropriate for some people. Young adults may keep a list of the names of doctors who are providing care and their contact information, and carry a copy of their Medi-Cal card or private health insurance coverage in case of an emergency.

## **Individual Transition Goals and Services**

While your child has been in school, you have developed an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) with the school district for needed educational and related support services. When a student turns 16 years of age, the Planning Team will begin to develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) to identify the knowledge, skills and school services that student needs to prepare for life after high school. ITP goals will describe the educational and functional steps to be taken to prepare the student for adult living. The student may invite the Service Coordinator to participate in the school planning meeting and to help coordinate goals and services. This Planning Team will identify adaptive/independent living skills that need further development. Those skills could include personal care, housekeeping, budgeting, cooking, safety and emergency plans. Educational services may be available until the student turns 22 years old.

Supports could include job development, job coaching, transportation, specialized job training, and supervision.



## Educational and Employment Resource

After high school is over, people want something to do. Some people go to college, some go to work. Many colleges have programs to support students with disabilities. The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) offers a variety of options for those who wish to work. There are also programs funded through the regional center that are available to those who have finished high school or Transition Program.

## Employment

After leaving high school, adults who wish to become employed may be eligible for Supported Employment services. Supports could include job development, job coaching, transportation, specialized job training and supervision. Micro-enterprise options are possible with the option of micro-loan funding of business ideas. Also Work Activity Programs and Vocational Training/Habilitation Programs provide options for paid employment. The Service Coordinator can provide information on how to participate.

## Day Programs

Day programs are community-based programs for individuals served by the regional center. They are designed to provide interesting activities and training opportunities in a structured setting. The Planning Team agrees upon the most appropriate program in advance and then the services are included in the person's Individual Program Plan (IPP). Day program services may be at a fixed location or out in the community. If you are interested in learning more about the various day program services, ask your Service Coordinator for assistance. Some day programs have waiting lists, so it is important to plan in advance.

▼  
**after high school**

We look forward to working together with you during the transition from school and into adulthood.



▶ **planning ahead**

Types of services available through a day program support the development of:

- Self-help and self-care skills
- The ability to interact with others, making one's needs known and responding to instructions
- Self-advocacy and employment skills
- Community integration skills such as accessing community services and resources
- Behavior management to help improve behaviors
- Social and recreational skills.

## Living Options

People may choose to remain living with their families after becoming adults. They may also wish to live independently from family in their own home or in a licensed residential home. If the young adult chooses to live in his or her own apartment, an application for subsidized housing may be appropriate. There is a long waiting list for Section 8 and other subsidized housing options, so an application should be made well in advance. Supported Living Services (SLS) and Independent Living Services (ILS) may be options for some adults.

Licensed residential homes are located in community settings and can be an option for either adults or children. Family Home Agencies can provide similar home-like settings as well. The goal for all residential services is to maintain the highest level of independence possible, while offering the person a safe place to live.

If you are considering a licensed home, your Service Coordinator can help arrange visits to homes in your community. Planning ahead is essential in order to find an available resource; some homes may have waiting lists. Several organizations work together to ensure these transitions go smoothly. Your Service Coordinator will be your partner throughout this process.

We look forward to working together with you and your son or daughter during the transition from school, and into adulthood.

Discuss the transition process with your Planning Team.



## CHECKLISTS

### TRANSITION LIST: Prior to age 18

#### Planning

- Discuss the transition process with your Planning Team and set target dates for decisions.
- Ensure that your Individual Program Plan (IPP) reflects an evolving vision for adult life.

#### Legal and Financial

- Update financial status and family estate plans.
- Establish personal bank account.
- Consider the financial resources that will be available to you, including public benefits, such as Social Security, SSI/SSP, or Medi-Cal.
- Investigate ABLE Account and Special Needs Trusts.

#### Responsibility and Independence

- Develop community safety and emergency help skills.
- Develop opportunities to gain away-from-home experience.
- Look for Special Olympics and inclusion programs available through the local Parks and Recreation Departments.

#### Education

- Learn about educational and transition programs available through your school.
- Explore post-secondary program options such as Community Colleges and four year universities as appropriate.

Ensure your circle of support collaborates for person centered planning and discussion.



### **Living Arrangements**

- Investigate licensed homes, supported living services or independent living services.
- Inquire about Section 8 housing and add your name to a waiting list if interested in renting.

### **Work and Volunteering**

- Research volunteering and community service activities.
- Obtain work permit for employment before 18.
- Explore youth employment and internship opportunities.
- Learn about California's employment first initiative.
- Learn about adult day and vocational services.

### **Transportation**

- Assess community mobility skills and develop a plan for transportation options, including public transportation and travel training.

## **TRANSITION LIST: Age 18 and Older**

### **Planning**

- Ensure that your circle of support collaborates for person centered planning and discussion.
- Explore employment and adult service options.
- Incorporate adult goals and services that support transition in your IPP.
- Attend Opportunity or Transition Fairs (sometimes called Open Houses).



## Learn how to stay safe in the community



### Legal and Financial

- Establish long range plans for future care.
- Develop or review ABLE accounts or estate plans.
- Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) along with planning for employment. Determine Representative Payee for SSI if need be.
- Apply for Medi-Cal benefits.
- Consider Health Care Directive and Power of Attorney and Representative Authorization.
- Determine need for Conservatorship.
- If male, register for Selective Service at [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov).
- At age 18, when decision making authority transfers to an individual, he or she assumes responsibility for signing and authorizing an IEP and IPP.

### Responsibility and Independence

- Create a health record-keeping notebook.
- Learn how to stay safe in the community.
- Explore social and recreational community opportunities.
- Apply for ID card through DMV and register to vote.

### Education

- Include opportunities for work experience and functional life skill outcomes in IEP.
- Determine if a high school diploma or certificate of completion will be a goal.

Match your job search with interests and talents.



### **Living Arrangements**

- ❑ Finalize planning for living at home, finding a licensed residential facility or living on your own. Supported Living Services (SLS) or Independent Living Services (ILS) may be available to support you.
- ❑ Track position on waiting list for Section 8 if you plan to live independently.

### **Work and Volunteering**

- ❑ Explore Supported Employment opportunities.
- ❑ Match your job search with interests and talents.

### **Transportation**

- ❑ Plan how you will get to work or other community locations.