



# FactSheet: Transition to Adult Life

## DHS Office of Intellectual Disability

*The transition from high school to adult life (secondary transition) can be a confusing and stressful time for all young adults, but for those who also have an intellectual disability diagnosis there are additional factors to consider. Below you will find information that will be helpful in beginning to plan for this transition. You may also consider attending transition workshops and fairs, referring to the PaTTAN website or calling the United Way 2-1-1.*

### **When does the transition from high school to adult life begin?**

In Pennsylvania, school districts are required to begin completing the transition planning section of a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) at the age of 14. Students should start to think about what they would like to do after high school; start exploring areas of interest and experimenting with different types of work to see what they may be able to do and will also enjoy. Services may be offered by the school district outside of the traditional classroom setting while the youth is still enrolled, usually until the age of 21.

### **Who is involved in the transition planning?**

The most important members of the transition planning team are the student and his family. Other people who should be involved in the planning and the implementation of the plan are the school district's IEP team, including the transition counselor. The student's Supports Coordinator (SC) from the ID service system should be included, as the SC is the person who will be assisting the student long after he has left the school system. Likewise, representatives from any other agency or service system involved in the student's life should participate.

### **What are my options for a meaningful daytime activity after I finish high school?**

There are several different types of opportunities that a graduate can explore. Some people choose to participate in only one of the following options, while others prefer to create a combination of daytime activities. There is no "one-size-fits-all" model; each student should develop a plan that includes the activities that best meet her needs. Working closely with all members of a transition team increases a student's location of and access to any of the types of programs below.

#### **Post Secondary Education**

Several programs in the area offer the opportunity to earn certifications or to increase a graduate's academic and vocational skills. This may include a college experience.

#### **Competitive Employment**

When possible, this is considered the first best option for employment for all individuals, with or without disabilities. Allowing for a higher level of independence, this is long-term employment in an integrated, community setting, receiving the same hourly wages and benefits as other coworkers.

#### **Job Coaching**

Staff support to assist an individual with a disability in working in a community setting, including job location, application, interviewing, and training.

#### **Volunteer work**

Many graduates enjoy participating in volunteer opportunities in their communities. This can be helpful in continuing to acquire vocational skills, while the graduate works for a sense of accomplishment and contribution. Volunteer work may be accomplished with or without formal supports.

## Work Skills Training

Students may need some additional training in work skills, including increasing their independence and “soft skills,” which are skills like attending work on time, practicing good hygiene, and interacting with coworkers appropriately. There are a few different kinds of programs that offer this kind of training:

### Transitional Work

These are small groups working in the community with staff support and supervision. Typically earning at least minimum wage, but in a non-integrated setting.

### Facility-Based Employment & Activities

*Pre-vocational Workshops:* typically provides a high level of support and supervision, focus on continuing to acquire vocational skills, ability to earn a small paycheck, often through piece-rate work.

*Adult Training Facilities (ATF):* typically provides a high level of support and supervision, less focus on vocational skills, more emphasis on socialization and life skills activities.

### Volunteer / Intern positions

Many graduates enjoy participating in volunteer opportunities in their communities. This can be helpful in continuing to acquire vocational skills, while the graduate works providing for a sense of accomplishment and contribution. Job coach supports may not be available for these positions.

### Opportunities through other service systems

Some students and graduates are involved in other service systems. If you are involved in other systems, such as Behavioral Health, ask your case management support, such as your Service Coordinator about available opportunities through their office.

## What are some other things I might need to think about?

**Medical Assistance:** is the student currently eligible for and/or receiving Medical Assistance (also called Medicaid or MA)?

**Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT):** is the student receiving benefits through this MA program that will end at age 21?

**Social Security:** is the student currently eligible for and/or receiving Social Security?

**OVR (Office of Vocational Rehabilitation):** Will the student be eligible for/benefit from OVR supports?

**Health insurance:** If the student is currently covered on his parent’s insurance plan and/or Medical Assistance and will anything change as they transition from high school?

**Transportation:** What type of transportation will the graduate need to attend daytime activities? Has the student participated in travel training or had a paratransit (ACCESS) evaluation?

**Housing:** will the student be planning to move from his parent’s home after he graduates? What types of housing options are available?

## Where do I start?

Start by meeting with the student’s transition team. Be sure to include the student as much as possible, as well as the Supports Coordinator. Supports coordination can continue throughout a person’s life, contributing to continuity of services and will help with identifying support needs that will be important to the student once they finish school—advance planning is essential. Keeping all members of the team informed and involved is the best way to successfully plan for the transition to adult life.

*Access additional FactSheets including How to Register for ID Services, Employment and Supports Coordination and Employment and Day Services for Individuals with Complex Needs on the DHS OID website.*