

Transition to Adulthood for Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities: A Timeline for Parents

Transitions occur in many areas of life as adolescents become young adults. These transitions might include movement from school to work or postsecondary education, the shift from pediatric to adult health care, and leaving the family home. For students with disabilities, preparation for transition should begin by age 14 and focus on academic instruction, community experiences, employment, daily living skills, and exploration of supports needed for success in adult life. This timeline identifies considerations in planning for transition by age, from 14 to the end of your child's educational entitlement at 21.

Age

14+



Age

16+



Age

18+



Age

21+



- Your child's IEP must identify a course of study and activities that help to develop goals for adult life
- Encourage your child to participate in their IEP meetings
- Explore your child's interests and opportunities to learn more about working, volunteering, and education after high school
- Support your child in developing problem-solving, decision-making, independent living, and advocacy skills
- Help your child learn about their health and how to manage their health care
- Think about the types of support your child may need to make financial, medical, educational and other decisions
- Begin to help your child save for disability expenses by opening an ABLE Account

- Your child's IEP must include goals for education, employment, and independent living after high school, as well as the services needed to achieve them
- Work with your child and their school to find work and volunteer experiences based on interests
- Help your child explore how to get around in your community using public transportation or by learning to drive
- With your child, start identifying adult health care providers by asking your child's pediatrician for recommendations
- If you haven't already, help your child access sexual education and understand changes related to puberty
- Consider options for guardianship and alternatives to guardianship such as supported decision-making, if needed

- Young adults reach the legal age of majority, regardless of disability and whether they still live at home
- Young adults with developmental disabilities (DD) should apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and will automatically receive Medicaid if eligible
- Explore supports available in adulthood and how to apply (see reverse)
- Between ages 18 and 22, your child should begin receiving health care from an adult provider
- If you haven't already, help your child learn how to manage their medications, make appointments, and communicate with health care providers
- Discuss where your child would like to live in the future and the supports they'll need
- Encourage your child to register to vote

- Eligibility for special education services ends once the school year in which your child turns 21 is completed
- Support your child in accessing services through adult systems and providers that will help them reach their goals for continued learning, employment, and community involvement
- If your child no longer wants to live at home, explore housing options and residential supports

Transition Planning

- Charting the Life Course: <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/>
- National Parent Center on Transition & Employment: <https://www.pacer.org/transition/>

Employment

- Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE): <https://apse.org/>

Financial Savings

- ABLE National Resource Center: <http://ablenrc.org>

Health

- Got Transition: <https://www.gottransition.org/>

Post-secondary Education

- Think College: <https://www.thinkcollege.net/>

Supported Decision Making

- National Resource Center for Supported Decision Making: <http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/>

Where to Go for Services in New Jersey

Age

14+



NJ Department of Health, Special Child Health Services (SCHS)

SCHS Case Management Units (CMU) work with you and your child's physician and/or specialists to evaluate your child's strengths and needs and develop an individual service plan (ISP). All NJ residents **birth through 21 years** with Special Health Care Needs or at risk for Developmental Delay are eligible. To learn more about SCHS, visit: <https://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/specialneeds/case-management/>

NJ Department of Children & Families, Children's System of Care (CSOC)

CSOC offers services for eligible **children up to age 21** for behavioral health or developmental disability needs, including: community-based services, in-home services, out-of-home residential services, and family support services (including respite). To learn more about CSOC, visit: <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/dccsc/>

NJ Department of Education

Your local school district is responsible for providing special education services, including transition planning. In NJ, the Office of Special Education within the Department of Education supervises and monitors the implementation of special education services. This includes hosting regional Dare to Dream Student Leadership Conferences to promote self-advocacy and leadership skills. To learn more about your child's educational rights and supports up to age 21, visit: <https://www.nj.gov/education/specialized/info/>

NJ Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development, Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRs)

DVRs provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities beginning with the school year in which they turn **14 and ending at age 21**. Pre-ETS include: job exploration and training/post-secondary education guidance; work-based learning experiences, internships, and apprenticeships; training to develop social and independent living skills; and instruction in self-advocacy. To learn more, visit: <https://nj.gov/labor/career-services/special-services/individuals-with-disabilities/index.shtml>

NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS)

DMAHS administers the New Jersey Personal Preference Program (PPP), which offers personal care attendant services to eligible children and adults who are NJ FamilyCare Plan A members. To learn more about the PPP, visit: <https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmahs/clients/njppp.html>

NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Disability Services (DDS)

DDS serves as a single point of entry for disability-related information and provides self-directed, non-medical personal care assistance for eligible individuals with permanent physical disabilities through its Personal Assistance Services Program (PASP). To learn more, visit: <https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/home/>

US Social Security Administration, Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

SSI provides a cash benefit that helps people with disabilities and low income to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. Those receiving SSI are automatically eligible for Medicaid. Young adults with IDD should apply for SSI through the Social Security Administration at age 18. To learn more about applying for SSI, visit: <https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-apply-ussi.htm>

NJ Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development, Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRs)

Upon graduation, your child may be eligible to receive adult employment services from NJ DVRs, including: career counseling, supported employment, job accommodations, and training opportunities. Your child can apply to determine eligibility for adult employment supports through DVRs 2 years prior to graduating. To learn more, visit: <https://nj.gov/labor/career-services/special-services/individuals-with-disabilities/index.shtml>

NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

DDD provides Medicaid-funded services and supports that assist adults with DD **age 21 and older** to live as independently as possible, including: individual supports at home and in the community; family supports; and employment/day services. Your child must be determined eligible for Medicaid and eligible to receive Division services. Your child may apply for eligibility at 18, but will not begin to receive services (if eligible) until age 21. To learn more about applying for DDD-funded services visit: <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/>

21+

