

# Transition Toolkit

*Transition Readiness and Supporting Skills, Tips and Tools*



UNIVERSITY OF  
ILLINOIS CHICAGO

**Division of Specialized  
Care for Children**



## **Division of Specialized Care for Children**

### **DSCC Transition Toolkit**

The transition to adulthood is a significant and exciting time in a person's life. For youth with special healthcare needs and their families, this journey is no less rewarding, but it requires careful planning and resources to support the transition. The University of Illinois Chicago's Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) can help you prepare for what lies ahead.

We have developed a set of checklists and tip sheets for both youth and their families to use along their transition journey. These materials can help you learn and practice new skills. They can also help you gain greater confidence and independence as you navigate changes and choose the path that is right for you and your family. We've packaged them for easy reference.

Our Transition Toolkit is organized by planning areas such as health care, education and work. You can find these handouts and other helpful resources in the Transition Tools section of our website at <https://dscc.uic.edu/browse-resources/transition-resources/>.

Our Care Coordinators can also partner with your family to put together a transition plan. This plan can help you identify clear goals for adulthood and the steps, services and resources necessary to achieve them. If you would like more information, call us at (800) 322-3722 or email [dscc@uic.edu](mailto:dscc@uic.edu).

We are eager to partner with you to make the journey to adulthood as successful as possible.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Jerkovitz  
Executive Director

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# HEALTH CARE

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Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

# Transition Readiness Assessment for Youth

Please fill out this form to help us see what you already know about your health, how to use health care and the areas you want to learn more about. If you need help with this form, please ask your parent/caregiver, doctor or Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) Care Coordinator.

Preferred name \_\_\_\_\_ Legal name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

## TRANSITION IMPORTANCE & CONFIDENCE *Please circle the number that best describes how you feel now.*

**The transfer to adult health care usually takes place between the ages of 18 and 22.**

How important is it to you to move to a doctor who cares for adults before age 22?

not — 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10 —> very

How confident do you feel about your ability to move to a doctor who cares for adults before age 22?

not — 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10 —> very

## MY HEALTH & HEALTH CARE *Please check the answer that best applies now.*

	NO	I WANT TO LEARN	YES
I can explain my health needs to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to ask questions when I do not understand what my doctor says.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know my allergies to medicines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know my family medical history.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I talk to the doctor instead of my parent/caregiver talking for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see the doctor on my own during an appointment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know when and how to get emergency care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know where to get medical care when the doctor's office is closed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I carry important health information with my every day (e.g., insurance card, emergency contact information).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know that when I turn 18, I have full privacy in my health care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know at least one other person who will support me with my health needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to find my doctor's phone number.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to make and cancel my own doctor appointments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a way to get to my doctor's office.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to get a summary of my medical information (e.g., online portal).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to fill out medical forms.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to get a referral if I need it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know what health insurance I have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to find healthcare providers in-network with my insurance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know what I need to do to keep my health insurance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to find a doctor/doctors who provide adult care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I talk with my parent/caregiver about the health care transition process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## MY MEDICINES *If you do not take any medicines, please skip this section.*

I know my own medicines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know when I need to take my medicines without someone telling me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to refill my medicines if and when I need to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## WHICH OF THE SKILLS LISTED ABOVE DO YOU MOST WANT TO WORK ON?

## How to Score the Transition Readiness Assessment for Youth (For Office Use Only)

The purpose of the transition readiness assessment is to begin a discussion with youth about health-related skills. Scoring is optional and can be used to follow individual progress on gaining these skills, not to predict successful transition outcomes.

This scoring sheet can be filled out to score a youth's completed transition readiness assessment or it can be used as a scoring guide to refer to when marking the score on their completed assessment.

Each response can be converted to a score of 0 (No), 1 (I want to learn), or 2 (Yes). Because not all youth are taking medicines, numbers in "My Health & Health Care" and "My Medicines" should be calculated separately.

MY HEALTH & HEALTH CARE <i>Please check the answer that <u>best</u> applies now.</i>	NO	I WANT TO LEARN	YES
I can explain my health needs to others.	0	1	2
I know how to ask questions when I do not understand what my doctor says.	0	1	2
I know my allergies to medicines.	0	1	2
I know my family medical history.	0	1	2
I talk to the doctor instead of my parent/caregiver talking for me.	0	1	2
I see the doctor on my own during an appointment.	0	1	2
I know when and how to get emergency care.	0	1	2
I know where to get medical care when the doctor's office is closed.	0	1	2
I carry important health information with me every day (e.g., insurance card, emergency contact information).	0	1	2
I know that when I turn 18, I have full privacy in my health care.	0	1	2
I know at least one other person who will support me with my health needs.	0	1	2
I know how to find my doctor's phone number.	0	1	2
I know how to make and cancel my own doctor appointments.	0	1	2
I have a way to get to my doctor's office.	0	1	2
I know how to get a summary of my medical information (e.g., online portal).	0	1	2
I know how to fill out medical forms.	0	1	2
I know how to get a referral if I need it.	0	1	2
I know what health insurance I have.	0	1	2
I know how to find healthcare providers in-network with my insurance.	0	1	2
I know what I need to do to keep my health insurance.	0	1	2
I know how to find a doctor/doctors who provide adult care.	0	1	2
I talk with my parent/caregiver about the health care transition process.	0	1	2
MY MEDICINES <i>If you do not take any medicines, please skip this section.</i>			
I know my own medicines.	0	1	2
I know when I need to take my medicines without someone telling me.	0	1	2
I know how to refill my medicines if and when I need to.	0	1	2

My Health & Health Care Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /42

My Medicines Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /6

## We're here to help.

To learn more about the Division of Specialized Care for Children's programs and services, check out our website at: [dscc.uic.edu](https://dscc.uic.edu)



The Six Core Elements of Health Care Transition™ are the copyright of Got Transition®. This version of the Six Core Elements has been modified and is used with permission.

# Transition Readiness Assessment for Parents/Caregivers

Please fill out this form to help us see what you already know about your child's health and the areas you think they want to learn more about. After you complete the form, you can ask your child to share their own answers from the self-assessment and compare. Your answers may be different. Your child's doctor will help you work on steps to increase your child's healthcare skills.

Youth name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Caregiver name \_\_\_\_\_

Youth date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

## TRANSITION IMPORTANCE & CONFIDENCE *Please circle the number that best describes how you feel now.*

**The transfer to adult health care usually takes place between the ages of 18 and 22.**

How important is it to your child to move to a doctor who cares for adults before age 22?

not — 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10 — very

How confident do you feel about your child's ability to move to a doctor who cares for adults before age 22?

not — 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10 — very

## MY CHILD'S HEALTH & HEALTH CARE *Please check the answer that best applies now.*

NO

THEY WANT  
TO LEARN

YES

My child can explain their health needs to others.

☐☐☐

My child knows how to ask questions when they do not understand what their doctor says.

☐☐☐

My child knows their allergies to medicines.

☐☐☐

My child knows our family medical history.

☐☐☐

My child talks to the doctor instead of me talking for them.

☐☐☐

My child sees the doctor on their own during an appointment.

☐☐☐

My child knows when and how to get emergency care.

☐☐☐

My child knows where to get medical care when the doctor's office is closed.

☐☐☐

My child carries important health information with them every day (e.g., insurance card, emergency contact information).

☐☐☐

My child knows that when they turn 18, they have full privacy in their health care.

☐☐☐

My child knows at least one other person who will support them with their health needs.

☐☐☐

My child knows how to find their doctor's phone number.

☐☐☐

My child knows how to make and cancel their own doctor appointments.

☐☐☐

My child has a way to get to their doctor's office.

☐☐☐

My child knows how to get a summary of their medical information (e.g., online portal).

☐☐☐

My child knows how to fill out medical forms.

☐☐☐

My child knows how to get a referral if they need it.

☐☐☐

My child knows what health insurance they have.

☐☐☐

My child knows what they need to do to keep their health insurance.

☐☐☐

My child and I talk about the health care transition process.

☐☐☐

## MY CHILD'S MEDICINES *If your child does not take any medicines, please skip this section.*

My child knows their own medicines.

☐☐☐

My child knows when they need to take their medicines without someone telling them.

☐☐☐

My child knows how to refill their medicines if and when they need to.

☐☐☐

## WHICH OF THE SKILLS LISTED ABOVE DOES YOUR CHILD MOST WANT TO WORK ON?

## How to Score the Transition Readiness Assessment for Parents/Caregivers (For Office Use Only)

The purpose of the transition readiness assessment is to begin a discussion with youth and parents/caregivers about health-related skills. Scoring is optional and can be used to follow individual progress on gaining these skills, not to predict successful transition outcomes.

This scoring sheet can be filled out to score a parent/caregiver's completed transition readiness assessment or it can be used as a scoring guide to refer to when marking the score on their completed assessment.

Each response can be converted to a score of 0 (No), 1 (They want to learn), or 2 (Yes). Because not all youth are taking medicines, numbers in "My Child's Health & Health Care" and "My Child's Medicines" should be calculated separately.

MY CHILD'S HEALTH & HEALTH CARE <i>Please check the answer that <u>best</u> applies now.</i>	NO	THEY WANT TO LEARN	YES
My child can explain their health needs to others.	0	1	2
My child knows how to ask questions when they do not understand what their doctor says.	0	1	2
My child knows their allergies to medicines.	0	1	2
My child knows our family medical history.	0	1	2
My child talks to the doctor instead of me talking for them.	0	1	2
My child sees the doctor on their own during an appointment.	0	1	2
My child knows when and how to get emergency care.	0	1	2
My child knows where to get medical care when the doctor's office is closed.	0	1	2
My child carries important health information with them every day (e.g., insurance card, emergency contact information).	0	1	2
My child knows that when they turn 18, they have full privacy in their health care.	0	1	2
My child knows at least one other person who will support them with their health needs.	0	1	2
My child knows how to find their doctor's phone number.	0	1	2
My child knows how to make and cancel their own doctor appointments.	0	1	2
My child has a way to get to their doctor's office.	0	1	2
My child knows how to get a summary of their medical information (e.g., online portal).	0	1	2
My child knows how to fill out medical forms.	0	1	2
My child knows how to get a referral if they need it.	0	1	2
My child knows what health insurance they have.	0	1	2
My child knows what they need to do to keep their health insurance.	0	1	2
My child and I talk about the health care transition process.	0	1	2
MY CHILD'S MEDICINES <i>If your child does not take any medicines, please skip this section.</i>			
My child knows their own medicines.	0	1	2
My child knows when they need to take their medicines without someone telling them.	0	1	2
My child knows how to refill their medicines if and when they need to.	0	1	2

My Child's Health & Health Care Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /40

My Child's Medicines Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /6

## We're here to help.

To learn more about the Division of Specialized Care for Children's programs and services, check out our website at: [dscc.uic.edu](https://dscc.uic.edu)



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# Self-Care Assessment for Parents/Caregivers of Young Adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

Caregivers of young adults (ages 18-25 years old) should complete this form to assess their young adult's ability to care for their own health. If a young adult's intellectual or developmental disabilities do not prevent him or her from independently filling out this form, they should complete the young adult version of this form instead.

Please fill out this form to help us see what your young adult already knows about their health and the areas that you think they/you need to learn more about. If you need help completing this form, please let us know.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Young Adult's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Caregiver Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Are you the main full-time caregiver: ☐ Yes ☐ No

## Decision-Making/Guardianship

- ☐ My young adult can make his/her own healthcare choices.
- ☐ My young adult needs some help with making healthcare choices. (Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Consent: \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ My young adult has a legal guardian. (Name: \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ My young adult/I need a referral to community services for legal help with healthcare decisions and guardianship.

## Personal Care

- ☐ My young adult can care for all his/her needs.
- ☐ My young adult can care for his/her own needs with help.
- ☐ My young adult is unable to care for himself/herself but can tell others his/her needs.
- ☐ My young adult requires help for all his/her needs.

## TRANSITION AND SELF-CARE IMPORTANCE & CONFIDENCE *Please circle the number that best describes how you feel now.*

How important is it for your young adult to take care of his/her own health care?

not — 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10 —> very

How confident do you feel about your young adult's ability to take care of his/her own health care?

not — 0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10 —> very

UNDERSTANDING YOUNG ADULT'S HEALTH <i>Please check the box that best applies right now.</i>	Yes, he/she knows this.	He/she needs to learn.	I need to learn.
My young adult knows his/her medical needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult can tell other people what his/her medical needs are.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult knows what to do if he/she has a medical emergency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult knows the medicines he/she takes and what they are for.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult can take his/her medicine by himself/herself without a reminder.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult knows what medicines he/she should not take.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult knows what he/she is allergic to, including medicines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult can name two to three people who can help him/her with his/her health goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult can explain to people how his/her beliefs affect his/her care choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child knows that when they turn 18, they have full privacy in their health care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
USING HEALTH CARE <i>Please check the box that best applies right now.</i>	Yes, he/she knows this.	He/she needs to learn.	I need to learn.
My young adult knows or can find his/her doctor's phone number.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult makes his/her own doctor appointments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before a visit, my young adult thinks about questions to ask.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult has a way to get to his/her doctor's office.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult knows he/she should show up 15 minutes before the visit to check in.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult knows where to get care when his/her doctor's office is closed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult has a folder at home with his/her medical information, including medical summary and emergency care plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult has a copy of his/her plan of care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult knows how to fill out medical forms.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult knows how to ask for a form to be seen by another doctor/therapist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult knows where his/her pharmacy is and what to do when he/she runs out of his/her medicines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult knows where to get a blood test or x-rays if the doctor orders them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult carries health information with him/her every day (e.g. insurance card, allergies, medications, and emergency phone numbers).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My young adult has a plan so he/she can keep his/her health insurance after age 18 or older.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## We're here to help.

To learn more about the Division of Specialized Care for Children's programs and services, check out our website at: [dscc.uic.edu](https://dscc.uic.edu)



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# Self-Care Skills Assessment for Young Adults

Please fill out this form to help us see what you already know about your health, how to use health care and the areas you want to learn more about. If you need help with this form, please ask your parent/caregiver, doctor or Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) Care Coordinator.

Preferred name

Legal name

Date of birth

Today's date

## SELF-CARE IMPORTANCE & CONFIDENCE *Please circle the number that best describes how you feel now.*

How important is it to you to manage your own health care?

not 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 → very

How confident do you feel about your ability to manage your own health care?

not 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 → very

## MY HEALTH & HEALTH CARE *Please check the answer that best applies now.*

	NO	I WANT TO LEARN	YES
I can explain my health needs to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to ask questions when I do not understand what my doctor says.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know my allergies to medicines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know my family medical history.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know when and how to get emergency care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know where to get medical care when the doctor's office is closed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I carry important health information with me every day (e.g., insurance card, emergency contact information).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know I have full privacy in my health care at age 18.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know I have to sign a form if I want others at my visit and to allow them to see my medical records.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know at least one other person who will support me with my health needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to find my doctor's phone number.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to make and cancel my own doctor appointments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a way to get to my doctor's office.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to get a summary of my medical information (e.g., online portal).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to fill out medical forms.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to get a referral if I need it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know what health insurance I have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know what I need to do to keep my health insurance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## MY MEDICINES *If you do not take any medicines, please skip this section.*

I know my own medicines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know when I need to take my medicines without someone telling me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to refill my medicines if and when I need to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## WHICH OF THE SKILLS LISTED ABOVE DO YOU MOST WANT TO WORK ON?



## How to Score the Self-Care Skills Assessment for Young Adults (For Office Use Only)

The purpose of the self-care skills assessment is to begin a discussion with young adults about health-related skills. Scoring is optional and can be used to follow individual progress on gaining these skills, not to predict successful outcomes.

This scoring sheet can be filled out to score a young adult's completed self-care skills assessment or it can be used as a scoring guide to refer to when marking the score on their completed assessment.

Each response can be converted to a score of 0 (No), 1 (I want to learn), or 2 (Yes). Because not all young adults are taking medicines, numbers in "My Health & Health Care" and "My Medicines" should be calculated separately.

MY HEALTH & HEALTH CARE <i>Please check the answer that <u>best</u> applies now.</i>	NO	I WANT TO LEARN	YES
I can explain my health needs to others.	0	1	2
I know how to ask questions when I do not understand what my doctor says.	0	1	2
I know my allergies to medicines.	0	1	2
I know my family medical history.	0	1	2
I know when and how to get emergency care.	0	1	2
I know where to get medical care when the doctor's office is closed.	0	1	2
I carry important health information with me every day (e.g., insurance card, emergency contact information).	0	1	2
I know I have full privacy in my health care at age 18.	0	1	2
I know I have to sign a form if I want others at my visit and to allow them to see my medical records.	0	1	2
I know at least one other person who will support me with my health needs.	0	1	2
I know how to find my doctor's phone number.	0	1	2
I know how to make and cancel my own doctor appointments.	0	1	2
I have a way to get to my doctor's office.	0	1	2
I know how to get a summary of my medical information (e.g., online portal).	0	1	2
I know how to fill out medical forms.	0	1	2
I know how to get a referral if I need it.	0	1	2
I know what health insurance I have.	0	1	2
I know what I need to do to keep my health insurance.	0	1	2
MY MEDICINES <i>If you do not take any medicines, please skip this section.</i>			
I know my own medicines.	0	1	2
I know when I need to take my medicines without someone telling me.	0	1	2
I know how to refill my medicines if and when I need to.	0	1	2

My Health & Health Care Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /36

My Medicines Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /6

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# Health Care Transition

## Transition Skills, Tips & Tools



### What is Health Care Transition?

Health care transition means moving from pediatric (child) to adult health care. A good transition takes planning. You may need to:

- Learn to take care of your own health
- Find new doctors
- Keep your health insurance coverage or find new insurance
- Get the services you need so you can lead the kind of life you want to have

### Who Should Help with Health Care Transition Planning?

The following people can help you and your family plan for transition:

- Your doctors
- Your family and friends
- Social worker, nurse, care coordinator, therapist, case manager, and others involved with your care
- School Individualized Education Program (IEP) team

### What Can I Do?

- Use resources like the [Transition Timeline](#) to learn what steps you need to take
- Use your support network (friends, advocates, personal assistant, co-workers) to help you plan and find resources
- Work with your doctor to create a portable medical summary
- Complete the healthcare readiness checklist each year
- Set goals for skills you'd like to work on
- Practice skills at home and in real-life settings. Ask your doctor for skill sheets to help with:
  - Finding adult healthcare providers
  - Getting a prescription
  - Understanding health insurance
  - Managing medications
  - Responding to a medical emergency
  - Working with your doctor
  - Knowing about differences in care as you prepare to transition to adult care

### Resources:

University of Illinois Chicago's Division of Specialized Care for Children

<https://dscc.uic.edu/browse-resources/transition-resources/>

Got Transition, the National Resource Center on Health Care Transition

<https://www.gottransition.org/youth-and-young-adults/>

# Pediatric Versus Adult Healthcare

## Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

### Differences in Care



When you become an adult, your experience at the doctor's office and the hospital might be different from what you are used to. This fact sheet explains some of the changes you might notice.

### Comfort and Familiarity

Pediatric	Adult	Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You have known your doctors for a long time.</li><li>• You feel comfortable during your visits.</li><li>• You know what to expect during the exam.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You won't know much about your new doctors and the staff.</li><li>• You will need to explain more about yourself and your condition.</li><li>• You might feel nervous about talking with the doctor.</li><li>• The exam might be different.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set up a "meet-the-doctor" visit with your new doctors.</li><li>• Be patient as your doctors get to know you.</li><li>• Ask your pediatric doctor to send records or a portable medical summary to your new adult doctor.</li><li>• Tell the doctor and someone you trust how you feel.</li><li>• Ask the doctor to explain what will happen during the examination.</li></ul>

### Responsibility

Pediatric	Adult	Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents often stay with you during your doctor visits.</li><li>• Parents help answer questions from the doctor for you.</li><li>• Parents help make decisions about your treatment.</li><li>• Parents arrange follow-up and check on test results.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You will decide if someone (friend, parent, caregiver) stays with you during your doctor visits.</li><li>• You will explain things about your treatment and condition on your own.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't be afraid to ask questions.</li><li>• Practice to be ready to take care of your own health.</li><li>• Ask your doctor for help to build your skills.</li><li>• If you want, someone you trust can stay with you.</li></ul>

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## Responsibility Cont.

Pediatric	Adult	Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents help you follow your treatment plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will decide about treatment.</li> <li>• You will follow-up on tests and appointments on your own.</li> <li>• You will take more responsibility for your medical care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may need to consider guardianship or other alternatives if you will always need help with making decisions, knowing when a decision must be made and expressing your decisions.</li> <li>• Write down a list of questions and concerns you have before seeing your new doctor.</li> <li>• Keep a list of your medicines, how much you take, and any allergies to medicines. You can take a picture of your medicine(s)'s label(s) and bring it with you to your visit.</li> <li>• Keep your doctor's phone number in your phone or somewhere you can easily find it.</li> <li>• Keep a record of your medical history, allergies and vaccines to share with your new doctor.</li> <li>• Ask your doctor to explain information you do not understand.</li> <li>• Ask your doctor if there is an online portal or an app you can use to look up your health information, contact information, or to make appointments.</li> </ul>



### Youth thoughts on moving to adult care:

***“The fact that I will have to go....and not being familiar with it. That’s probably where the nervousness comes from”.***

## Services

Pediatric	Adult	Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You might be seen by a team of doctors and other health providers at the same visit.</li> <li>• Your pediatric specialists may provide both specialty and some primary care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You might have to see doctors and other providers at different locations and on different days.</li> <li>• Adult specialists often do not provide primary care, so you need to have a primary care doctor along with a specialist.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find an adult primary care doctor who will help you co-ordinate care with specialists and other providers.</li> <li>• Talk to a social worker about adult services you may need and be eligible for (such as personal assistant, home services, financial help, etc.).</li> </ul>

## Services Cont.

Pediatric	Adult	Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your doctors focus on your present and future possibilities.</li> <li>Your parent is told about your growth and development, health information and medical care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your adult doctors might focus on what you can do in the present.</li> <li>Your health information will be kept private and can only be shared with your consent on maintenance of well being with aging.</li> <li>If you have a guardian, he/she will be told about your health information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask your doctor to help you think about how work choices may affect your health and explore available accommodations.</li> <li>Be sure to sign a consent to share your health information with whom you choose.</li> <li>Ask your doctor where to go if you need to get care after office hours or on the weekend.</li> </ul>

## Insurance and Payment

Pediatric	Adult	Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents help you with your insurance benefits (referral process, co-pays, in-network providers).</li> <li>Parents pay for your medical care.</li> <li>You may have insurance coverage available only to dependents (parent's policy) or children through age 18.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will be more responsible for knowing and using your adult insurance benefits.</li> <li>You will need to pay for your own medical care.</li> <li>You may need to find new insurance to cover you as an adult (employer benefits, Health Benefits for Workers with Disabilities, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn ways to maximize your benefits.</li> <li>Learn about adult insurance options.</li> <li>Find out when your current coverage will end.</li> <li>Keep your health insurance card with you always.</li> <li>Be ready to pay for charges at the visit.</li> </ul>



### Youth thoughts after moving to adult care:

***"She gave me this big talk about some of the new things, I'm going to encounter as an adult with a chronic condition. And she just opened my eyes to a lot of things".***

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# Regular Checkups!

## They're a Part of Everyone's Life

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Annual Health Care Visits



1. A yearly routine health visit (physical, well check) is important, even when you feel fine.
2. Early treatment may help keep health problems from becoming serious.
3. Checkups help identify your health needs and make sure you are receiving the care you need.
4. Your doctor will help you understand more about your physical growth, your social and sexual development, and the importance of being involved in your healthcare decisions.
5. Your doctor should talk with you about the benefits of following a healthy diet and safe weight control.
6. Your doctor should discuss the benefits of exercise and encourage you to exercise safely on a regular basis.
7. Your doctor will discuss reasons you should avoid using tobacco, alcohol and other abusive substances.
8. Your doctor should check you annually for high blood pressure. You may also have a screening to check your risk for heart disease as an adult.
9. Your doctor will ask about behaviors or emotions and, if needed, refer you to resources to help keep you healthy.
10. You might need to get a vaccine to prevent you from getting sick.
11. It is also important to see your dentist every six months for a dental checkup and to have your teeth cleaned.

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# Primary Care Providers Keep You Healthy and Take Care of You When You Get Sick

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Primary Care Providers



1. Like a car, your body needs regular checkups.
2. It is important that one health provider helps take care of all your basic health needs and not just a part of your body, like many specialists do.
3. Primary care providers (PCP) help you in many different ways:
  - They teach you how to keep yourself healthy.
  - They oversee all of your health care, including preventative care, and will help direct care and services.
  - They can treat you before health problems become serious.
  - They help you prevent illnesses and secondary disabilities.
  - They refer you to specialty care when you need it.
4. Staying healthy can make it easier to do the things you enjoy.
5. Talk to your PCP about:
  - What works best for you.
  - Ways to make the exam or treatment easier for you by sharing your special interests, activities and routines.
  - If you are more at risk for infections, you might want to ask to wait in a special area.
6. Ask your PCP for a written care plan to help guide your care and coordinate with others.
7. Ask your PCP to help write a portable medical summary to help you inform all your providers. Your medical summary can be helpful with transitioning your care to your adult PCP and specialists.

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# My Body is Changing

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
"What's happening to me?"



**Puberty is the time in your life when your body starts to change, and you become more grown-up:**

## Girls

- Breasts develop
- Hair grows on legs, under arms and in pubic area
- Hips get wider and waist gets smaller
- Skin gets oily and sweat increases
- Periods start
- May grow taller very fast

## Boys

- Arms, legs, and hands grow fastest
- Hair grows on legs, face, under arms, and in pubic area
- Voice gets deeper
- Become taller and shoulders broaden
- Skin gets oily and sweat increases
- Penis and testes grow larger

**The changes that you experience are happening because your hormone levels are changing.**

**Remember, everyone goes through puberty differently. Eventually we all catch up with our friends who may have developed sooner.**

**Your emotions will change, too.** You may start to think and act differently as you take on more responsibilities and start to make your own decisions.

## Resources:

- Everything You Wanted to Know about Puberty:” [kidshealth.org/en/teens/puberty.html](https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/puberty.html)
- “Puberty Survival Guide:” [rush.edu/news/puberty-survival-guide](https://rush.edu/news/puberty-survival-guide)
- “How to Talk with Your Kids About Puberty:” [www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/700childrens/2015/06/how-to-talk-with-your-kids-about-puberty](https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/700childrens/2015/06/how-to-talk-with-your-kids-about-puberty)

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# Managing Stress

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
So Many Demands, So Little Time



1. **Stress is your body's way of reacting to life's pressures.**
2. **Many places and things can make you feel stressed:**
  - Your health
  - Family and friends
  - Home
  - Work
3. **Some stress is normal. However, if stress makes you feel sad and irritable, *WATCH OUT!***
4. **Learn to recognize the signs of stress:**
  - Physical - headache, pounding heart, trembling
  - Behavioral - anxious, changes in eating habits, sleeping problems
5. **Figure out what things make you feel stressed. You can then begin making changes in your day, relationships, work, etc., to work through your stress and feel better.**
6. **Managing your stress is important. Some ways to do this include:**
  - Deep breathing
  - Meditation
  - Exercise
  - Take a walk
  - Listening to music
  - Talk to a friend
7. **Reduce the stress in your life by scheduling daily periods of relaxation and exercise, eating right and getting enough rest.**
8. **It is OK to talk to a professional counselor.**

**You may find these stress management resources helpful:**

Creative Healing for Youth in Pain: <https://mychyp.org/>

TeenHealth Matters' Stress Management Resources: <https://teenhealthmatters.org/stress-management/>

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# Do You Understand Insurance?

## Transition Skills, Tips & Tools



### Learn Your Insurance Benefits

- Find your in-network providers. You can contact your insurance company's member services (see the phone number on your insurance ID card) for a list of providers. You can check your insurance company's website and use the "Find a Doctor or Hospital" (pharmacies, urgent care and more) search feature.
- Use providers who are in your network to be sure your insurance benefits will cover as much of the cost as possible.
- Begin to learn what services your insurance covers. Know your plan's deductible(s) and co-payments. Your policy book, member services and insurance company website can help you gain information.
- Always carry your own copy of your current insurance card.
- Find out if you need a referral from your primary care physician before you go to a new doctor or specialist.
- Find out if your insurance company will pay for your equipment to be fixed and/or replaced if necessary.
- Read about the appeal process in your policy book and use it when you think services have been denied in error.
- Before turning 18 years old, check what age your current plan coverage will end and apply for adult health insurance before your coverage ends.

### When Contacting Your Insurance Company, Be Ready to Provide:

- ✓ Your name and date of birth
- ✓ Identification number (on your insurance card or Social Security number/policyholder Social Security number)
- ✓ Relationship to the policyholder (self, child, parent, etc.), date of birth, address and phone number
- ✓ Date of service
- ✓ Reason you are calling
- ✓ If available, a reference number (on the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) or letter from insurance)

### Keep Track of Insurance Information

- Keep track of phone calls with your insurance company. Write down the date, the number you called, who you talked to, what you talked about and what is going to happen next.
- Follow up to make sure issues/problems are resolved.
- Keep all insurance information where you can easily find it (folder, computer). Save EOB forms, eligibility and denial letters, and notices regarding a change in covered or excluded services, deductibles, co-payments or out-of-pocket expenses.

**(Turn over for adult health insurance options)**

# Explore Adult Insurance Options

**Before turning 18, check what age your current plan coverage will end and apply for adult health insurance before your coverage ends.**

You can search to find which public, private and community programs meet your needs at:

[www.healthcare.gov/](http://www.healthcare.gov/)

**Employee Benefits - your own coverage:** Set career goals for gainful employment with health insurance coverage offered through employment.

**Employee Benefits - your parents' coverage:** Most plans carry all young adults up to age 26. Adults who are dependent on their parents for lifetime care and supervision may be able to stay on their parents' plan for longer. You can call the **Illinois Department of Insurance** at **(877) 527-9431** to ask questions about healthcare coverage.

**The Health Insurance Marketplace:** Visit [getcovered.illinois.gov](http://getcovered.illinois.gov) to view plans to see if you can find the right plan for you.

**Campus Health Plan:** College students may qualify for their school's insurance plan.

**Private Plan:** You may be able to buy an individual plan from a health insurance company.

**Health Benefits for Workers with Disabilities:** If you have a disability and are working, you may qualify for this program. Visit [hfs.illinois.gov/medicalprograms/hbwd.html](http://hfs.illinois.gov/medicalprograms/hbwd.html) or call **(800) 226-0768** or **(866) 675-8440 (TTY)**.

**Medicaid:** Illinois residents with disabilities and low income and assets may be eligible for insurance through Medicaid. Visit [www.illinois.gov/hfs/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.illinois.gov/hfs/Pages/default.aspx) or call **(800) 843-6154**. To apply, visit [abe.illinois.gov](http://abe.illinois.gov).

**Medicare:** Individuals with certain disabilities who have received Social Security disability benefits for 24 months may be eligible for health insurance through Medicare.

Call **1-800-MEDICARE ((800) 633-4227)** or go to [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

**Life Insurance and Disability Insurance:** Although it is not pleasant to think about, having a life insurance policy may help you continue to provide for your family once you are gone.

**PACER Center:** Visit [www.pacer.org/publications/possibilities/life-and-disability-insurance.asp](http://www.pacer.org/publications/possibilities/life-and-disability-insurance.asp)

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# What is Your Health Condition?

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Knowing Your Health Care Needs



## 1. Knowing your health condition/disability can help you in many ways:

- Makes it easier to talk with your doctor, family, friends, teachers and others.
- You can better speak up for yourself to get your needs met.
- As you get older, having a better understanding of your condition and what it takes to keep yourself healthy is important.
- Becoming responsible for your own health care can help you become more independent.
- Helps you stay healthy and makes it easier to do the things you enjoy.
- You'll know how your health condition/disability affects your daily activities so you can find the supports, devices or accommodations needed to help you do the things you want to do.

## 2. You can learn more about your health by:

- Keeping a record of your medical history, including conditions, surgeries, treatments (dates, doctors, medical advice).
- Filling out medical forms at the doctor's office.
- Knowing your warning signs so that you get help as soon as it is needed.
- Knowing the names of your medications and what they do for you. If you are not able to remember the names or what your medicines do, you should ask somebody to write this down for you. Always carry it in your wallet to share with providers when needed.
- Asking your doctor, nurse or DSCC Care Coordinator to help you write a plan of care or a portable medical summary. This will make it easier to share information with others that care for you, including the new doctor(s) that will care for you when you are an adult.
- Talking to others who have a similar disability/health condition.

## 3. You may find helpful information about staying healthy and/or specific information about your condition/disability at:

- [kidshealth.org/en/teens/all-categories](https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/all-categories)
- [ttaonline.org/disability-related-information](https://ttaonline.org/disability-related-information)

Go to the next page for more tips on learning more about your health condition.

# Knowing About Your Medical Condition/Disability

1. Go to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) [www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/Tools/Ask-Me-3-Good-Questions-for-Your-Good-Health.aspx](http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/Tools/Ask-Me-3-Good-Questions-for-Your-Good-Health.aspx) to learn more about the three questions you need to ask at each doctor's visit:

What is my main problem?

What do I need to do?

Why is it important for me to do this?

2. Know your diagnosis and treatment:

Diagnosis(es):

Treatment:

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3. List the medical symptoms that are typical for your condition:

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4. Symptoms to watch for:

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Action Plan:

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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# Taking Care of Your Special Healthcare Needs

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Medical Treatments



1. Start to learn about your disability or condition.
2. Ask your healthcare team to help you learn about your condition and connect you with other young people with disabilities. Your DSCC Care Coordinator can also help you.  
  
Make sure you understand your medications, what their names are, what they do and when you take them.
3. Start taking more responsibility for your own self care (such as cleaning your equipment, doing your exercises, following your special diet and taking your medications without being reminded). Take pictures or notes of the steps involved and keep these in a notebook or mount on poster board to use as a guide.
4. Take an active role in your appointments by asking questions.
5. Ask your healthcare providers to explain to you why you are having a test and what the results of the test may mean.
6. Know about any allergies you have.
7. Learn the warning signs that mean you need emergency medical help and know what to do in an emergency.
8. Talk to your doctor about how smoking, street drugs and alcohol interact with your condition and the medications you are taking.
9. Talk to your doctor about difficult topics, such as the changes in your body, puberty and birth control. You may want to consider genetic counseling to learn how your condition might affect your family or you during some stages in life.
10. Learn how to have a prescription filled using your insurance.
11. Ask your healthcare team about adaptive equipment or assistive technology that may be available to help you perform treatments or activities of daily living more independently.
12. Talk to your doctor about the transition to adult health care, how and when you should move to adult providers and services, your options and what differences to expect in the adult services.



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# What To Do In a Medical Emergency

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools



## Emergencies Can Happen at Any Time

- **Plan ahead** so if there is an emergency, you can **act fast** and **stay calm**.
- **Learn symptoms** that need **urgent medical help**, for example:
  - Sudden dizziness or fainting
  - Sudden increased weakness
  - Change in level of awareness/alertness (hard to wake up)
  - Seizure
  - Hard time breathing
  - Feeling like you will hurt yourself
  - Severe allergic reaction
  - Sudden change in eyesight
  - High fever
  - Severe vomiting or diarrhea
  - Coughing up blood
  - Loss of consciousness
  - Severe burns

(Turn over for more practice tips and resources)

## Always Be Prepared for an Emergency

- Practice how you will tell others when you are having a medical emergency.
- Make sure you or somebody with you can explain **ALL** your health conditions and medicines.
- Be ready to **call 911** if you or someone else is badly hurt or in danger.
- Be sure to have an **In Case of Emergency (ICE)** name and number saved in your cell phone.
- Learn about symptoms that would need 911 and symptoms that could wait long enough to drive to the nearest emergency room.
- Talk with your doctor about wearing a medical alert bracelet, if needed. Ask your doctor or search the web to find a bracelet that fits your needs.
- Always carry identification, your insurance card, medication list, and your emergency care plan (if you have one).
- Know where the closest emergency room is to your home, job and other places you spend time.

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## Practice Giving the Information Needed When Calling 911

What is the emergency: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Where you are: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact and phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
(parent, friend, roommate)

Who is with you: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance information: \_\_\_\_\_

- When calling 911, stay on the phone until the operator says you can hang up.
- It might be helpful to write down your name, address, phone number, emergency contact phone number, and insurance information to keep near your home phone, in your wallet, or taped to your cell phone.

## Putting Your Plan Into Place

- Keep a digital and hard copy. Place the hard copy where it's easy to find, like your refrigerator.
- Share with three to five emergency contacts who can serve as allies during an event. Include specifics about your treatments, health needs, behavioral considerations, medications, supplies and equipment.
- Have more than one way to access your emergency contacts/plan (technology could go down, and printed copies could be out of reach). Keep emergency contact information with you, such as in your wallet.
- Set a reminder to review your plan regularly (annually). Keep emergency contacts up-to-date.

## Emergency Resources

The following resources might be helpful with planning for emergencies:

- **Be Ready: Tips for Families of Children and Youth With Special Healthcare Needs** - [emscimprovement.center/domains/preparedness/asprcoe/eglp cdr/cyshcn/toolkit/beready/](https://emscimprovement.center/domains/preparedness/asprcoe/eglp cdr/cyshcn/toolkit/beready/)
- **Making a Family Emergency Plan** - [www.ready.gov/plan](https://www.ready.gov/plan)
- **Personal Preparedness Planning for People with Disabilities** - [aspr.hhs.gov/behavioral-health/Pages/default.aspx](https://aspr.hhs.gov/behavioral-health/Pages/default.aspx)
- **Making a Disaster Kit** - [www.ready.gov/kit](https://www.ready.gov/kit)
- **Disaster Safety for People with Disabilities** - [www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/inclusive-preparedness-resources.html](https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/inclusive-preparedness-resources.html)
- **One-Page Emergency Snapshot List** - [complexchild.org/articles/2017-articles/november/emergency-one-page/](https://complexchild.org/articles/2017-articles/november/emergency-one-page/)
- **Emergency Information Form for Children With Special Healthcare Needs** - [www.acep.org/by-medical-focus/pediatrics/medical-forms/emergency-information-form-for-children-with-special-health-care-needs](https://www.acep.org/by-medical-focus/pediatrics/medical-forms/emergency-information-form-for-children-with-special-health-care-needs)
- **The September 26th Project** - [www.september26.org/](https://www.september26.org/)
- **Portable Medical Summary** - [dscc.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/96-Portable-Medical-Summary.pdf](https://dscc.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/96-Portable-Medical-Summary.pdf)
- **Emergency Preparedness Toolkit for Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Their Primary Care Team** - [www.thenationalalliance.org/publications/2022/3/29/emergency-preparedness-toolkit-for-young-adults-with-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities-and-their-primary-care-team](https://www.thenationalalliance.org/publications/2022/3/29/emergency-preparedness-toolkit-for-young-adults-with-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities-and-their-primary-care-team)



# Mental Health Resources

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

**Support Groups** The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Illinois offers free and confidential support groups. These groups aim to help you and others in the group have an opportunity to be heard and to be helped. They include a peer-led support group for adults living with a mental health condition and a peer-led family support group for adult family members, caregivers and loved ones. [namiillinois.org/support-and-education/support-groups/](https://namiillinois.org/support-and-education/support-groups/).

**Illinois Department of Human Services-Division of Mental Health (DMH)** DMH provides services at all levels for adults and children throughout the state. [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29735](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29735).

## Fact Sheet:

Essential information and resources to help young people get the mental health support they need. [www.nami.org/your-journey/kids-teens-and-young-adults/](https://www.nami.org/your-journey/kids-teens-and-young-adults/)

## Video:

“How to Parent a Depressed Child” - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMJbn1-apcU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMJbn1-apcU)

## National Organizations:

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** NAMI is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI works to educate, support, advocate, listen and lead to improve the lives of people with mental illness and their loved ones. Find your local NAMI at [www.nami.org/Find-Your-Local-NAMI](https://www.nami.org/Find-Your-Local-NAMI).

**Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities National Training Center** [www.mhddcenter.org/](https://www.mhddcenter.org/)

The center works to improve mental health services and supports for people with developmental disabilities. By serving as a national clearinghouse, the center helps provide access to the most current evidence-based, trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices that address the mental health needs of individuals with developmental disabilities.

## National Crisis Resources:

**988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** Call or text **988** or visit [988lifeline.org/](https://988lifeline.org/). The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7 to offer free and confidential support. Whether you are facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug concerns or just need someone to talk to, Lifeline counselors can help. You can call, chat, or text. The 988 ASL Videophone is also available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Crisis Text Line** Text **"HOME"** to **741741** or visit [www.crisistextline.org/](https://www.crisistextline.org/)  
The Crisis Text Line serves anyone in any type of crisis, 24 hours a day. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds with support and referrals.

**The Trevor Project** Call **(866) 488-7386** or Text **"START"** to **678678** [www.thetrevorproject.org](https://www.thetrevorproject.org)  
Trained counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to support youth who are in crisis, feeling suicidal, or in need of a safe and judgment free place to talk. The Trevor Project specializes in supporting the LGBTQI+ community.

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline**  
Call **(800) 662-HELP** or **(800) 622-4357** [www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline)

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24-hour, seven-days-a-week treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

**SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline** Call or text **(800) 985-5990** [www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline)

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline is available 24 hours, seven days a week with crisis counseling and support for people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.

## Finding a Behavioral Health Provider

**The National Council for Mental Wellbeing** [www.thenationalcouncil.org/](https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/)

Search for organizations that are committed to providing mental health services to anyone in the community who needs it regardless of their ability to pay.

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** [www.samhsa.gov/find-help](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help)

SAMHSA provides information on mental health services and treatment centers through an online service locator. You can search by your location, whether or not they provide services for youth, payment options (private insurance, cash, or something else), languages spoken, etc.

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# Finding Adult Providers

## Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

### Adult Healthcare Providers



It is important to find your adult doctors early. You should begin seeing an adult doctor around ages 18 to 21. It's a good idea to have your first appointments and send your records to your new doctors while still seeing your current doctors. This overlap will help in case there are questions about your condition or treatment.

### How to Find Adult Providers

- Ask your current doctor for a referral
- Consider your parents' doctor
- Use the provider finder on your insurance company's website
- Check with your local support groups
- Call large medical and specialty rehabilitation hospitals and ask for their referral line
- Ask your Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) Care Coordinator or Hospital Case Manager for suggestions
- Ask friends for suggestions

### Questions to Ask

It is important to find a doctor who makes you feel comfortable and can meet your needs. Before you choose your new doctor, call his/her office and ask to speak with a staff member who has time to answer your questions. You can also make an appointment to meet the doctor and staff in person.

#### **Ask the Office:**

- ☐ Does the doctor accept your insurance coverage? Is he/she taking new patients?
- ☐ Is the office accessible (easy to reach and easy to get around inside the building or clinic area)?
- ☐ What are the office hours? How can the doctor be reached after-hours?
- ☐ How will the doctor share information with your specialists?
- ☐ Will you have access to a patient health portal to schedule appointments and receive secure email messages, including test results and more, to manage your health care.
- ☐ Will the office be flexible to meet your health needs? (For example, will they allow a service dog, have flexible hours on weekends and evenings, schedule visits so you will not miss a meal or at quiet times if you are sensitive to noise)?

# Finding Adult Providers

- ☐ What telehealth options are available?
- ☐ Will this doctor be your doctor at the hospital or will a hospitalist see you?
- ☐ Will you always see the doctor or will you see other advance practice providers (e.g., advance practice nurse, physician assistant)?
- ☐ If urgent care (not emergency care) is needed, where should you go and should you call your doctor first?

## ***Ask the doctor:***

- ☐ Will he/she discuss your health history and special needs with your pediatric doctor?
- ☐ Does the doctor see patients with health conditions similar to yours?
- ☐ At what hospital does the doctor schedule procedures?
- ☐ Does the doctor have any special interests or more advanced training?

## ***Ask yourself:***

- ☐ Does the doctor listen to your questions or is he/she constantly interrupting you?
- ☐ Can the doctor explain information so that you can understand it?
- ☐ Does he/she take enough time to answer your questions?
- ☐ Does the doctor treat you with respect?

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# Make Each Doctor's Appointment Work for You

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
*Making Your Own Appointments*



1. Before your appointment, write down your questions and concerns. If it's a long list, ask for a longer appointment.
2. Bring your list of health concerns to tell your doctor or nurse.
3. Begin making your own appointments:
  - Watch your parent make an appointment
  - Practice with your parent what you will say
  - Have a calendar ready and know what dates and times will work with your school schedule and other activities you are involved in
  - Talk to the staff to schedule your appointment
4. Keep track of your appointments (on a calendar, on your phone, in a notebook, appointment card in your wallet).
5. Try asking the following three questions at each appointment:
  - What is my main problem?
  - What do I need to do?
  - Why is it important for me to do this?
6. Help your health providers by knowing your own medical history and what your needs are.
7. If you see specialists, ask them to share reports with your primary care physician and other specialists.
8. Bring a list of your medicines.
9. Bring your insurance card.
10. Ask lots of questions. Make sure you understand what you need and why certain medication, therapy, or equipment is necessary.
11. Have parent(s) remain in the waiting room while you spend time with your healthcare provider on your own.

**(Next page provides tips for making your own appointments)**

# How to Make an Appointment

- Be prepared. Get help and practice before doing this by yourself.
- Have your calendar ready to be sure you make the appointment where it fits best with your school schedule or work schedule.
- When you call, be sure to ask to be put in touch with Dr. \_\_\_\_\_  
(fill in your doctor's or nurse practitioner's name)
- Know your date of birth.
- Know the name of your insurance provider.
- Know the reason you need the appointment.
- If you need assistance to get onto the exam table or need an interpreter, be sure to mention it when you call.

## Sample Script:

"Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_"  
(Use your first and last name)

"I need an appointment to see \_\_\_\_\_"

"Because \_\_\_\_\_"  
(Example: "I need a checkup, I'm having headaches, I'm having ear pain.")

"How soon can I get in? \_\_\_\_\_"  
(Write date and time here)

*If the date and time is okay, say, "Thank you, that will be fine." If not, say, "That won't work for me, can you look for something else?"*

"How long is the appointment? \_\_\_\_\_"  
*If you think you will need more time, say, "I think I will need more time."*

***If you will need extra help or equipment, be sure to say so:***

"I will need \_\_\_\_\_"  
(Example: a lift to get onto the exam table)

***Before you end the phone call, repeat the date and time of your appointment:***

"Okay, I will be there on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_"  
(Date) (Time)

Follow-up steps: \_\_\_\_\_

**Put the appointment on the calendar so you won't forget it.  
Prepare questions for your doctor. Bring a list of your medications.**

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# Managing Medications

## Take Medications as Directed

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools



### Things to Know About Your Medicine

- Make sure you know the exact name of the medicine(s) you take (brand and generic).
- Some medications have brand and generic forms. Ask your doctor if it is alright to substitute with generic form.
- Learn why you need to take each medicine (how it treats your condition).
- Take your medicine at the same time every day. Taking your medicine at a specific time might be better than bedtime if your bedtime changes. Work with your doctor to set a schedule that works for you.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about taking your medicine.
- Let your doctor know if you have trouble taking your medicines (hard to swallow, forget to take, upset stomach, other problems).
- Side effects can be bothersome and dangerous - make sure you know what to look for and when you should call the doctor.
- Don't take too much or too little medication. Know how much to take, when you can take more, and which medicines can be taken together.
- Whenever you go to a doctor or to the hospital, always bring your medications or a list of your medications, including non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications.
- Keep track of when you need to refill your medicines and call the pharmacy for your refills before you run out.
- Keep your list of medicines with you.

### Find a Way to Remember to Take Your Medicines

You may want to use medication reminders:

- Take at the same time you do another daily routine (with breakfast, brush your teeth, watch a daily TV show).
- Set up a text message or cell phone alarm.
- Use an alarm-vibrating pillbox, pill organizer, automatic pill dispenser, time watch, or alarm pocket watch.

To find the right system for you:

- ✓ Ask your pharmacist.
- ✓ Check with your local medical supply stores.
- ✓ Search the web using search words such as pill alarms, automated medication dispenser, e-pill, or pill timer.

**(Turn page over to begin your medication list)**

# Medication List

(Please use pencil to complete this form.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Ask your physician or pharmacist to help you complete this list.
- Read the label on each medicine for directions on how to take and for possible side effects/ danger signs/interactions. For more information, see drug sheets.
- Whenever you see the doctor, including your primary care physician and any specialists, review and update this medication list.
- After hospitalizations, always review your medication list with your doctor.

Medicine	Dosage (How Many You Take)	Time (When You Take It)	Why You Take It	What Happens If You Skip It	Possible Side Effects

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# It's Your Body - Know What You Are Putting Into It

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Drugs and Smoking



- **You only get one body, so it is your job to take care of it the best that you can.**
- **Trying to say “NO” to things like tobacco, e-cigarettes, vapes, street drugs, and alcohol is often difficult**, especially when you are a teen and under peer pressure to fit in.
- **You need to decide what is right for you.** Make sure you get ALL the facts before you jump to a decision.
- **Medications, tobacco, street drugs, and alcohol are all chemicals** that cause your body to react in different ways.
- There is evidence that e-cigarettes and vape pens contain harmful toxins of their own, such as formaldehyde (a known carcinogen), nitrosamines (linked to cancer) and lead (a neurotoxin).
- E-cigarettes and vape pens can be dangerous even when you're not the one using them. The Surgeon General says secondhand e-cigarette vapor has heavy metals and tiny particles that can harm the lungs. The American Lung Association warns that children and youth should stay away from secondhand e-cigarette and vape pen aerosol.
- **Ask your pharmacist** about the medications you take and what substances might interfere with them and put you at risk for developing serious side effects.
- **If you are unsure about trying something new, wait awhile** and give yourself time to make the decision that is right for you. It may change your life.

## Resources you may be interested in:

Vaping and e-cigarettes: [drugfree.org/drugs/e-cigarettes-vaping/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIyoST4burQIVFQnnCh3cVAy1EAAYASAAEgIIJvD\\_BwE](https://drugfree.org/drugs/e-cigarettes-vaping/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIyoST4burQIVFQnnCh3cVAy1EAAYASAAEgIIJvD_BwE)

Tobacco and Use Prevention Resources: [www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/substance-abuse/Pages/For-Kids-Teens-Tobacco-Education-Resources.aspx](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/substance-abuse/Pages/For-Kids-Teens-Tobacco-Education-Resources.aspx)

Drugs and Alcohol Information for Teens: [kidshealth.org/en/teens/drug-alcohol/](https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/drug-alcohol/)

**SAMHSA's National Helpline: (800) 662-HELP (4357)** or TTY: (800) 487-4889. This helpline is a confidential, free, 24-hour, 365-day-a-year information service. Support is available in English and Spanish for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.

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# GUARDIANSHIP

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Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

# Guardianship and Alternatives

Transition Skills Tips & Tools



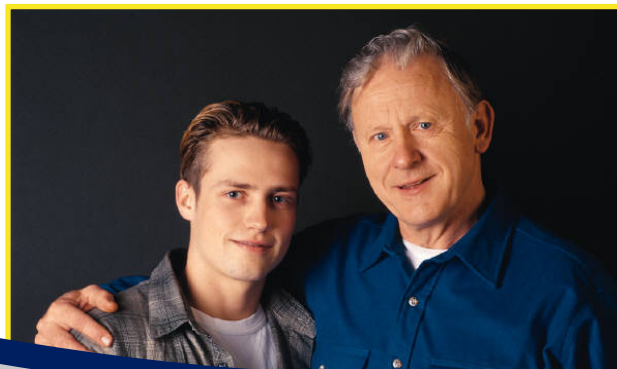
## Who Will Make Decisions for Your Adult Child?

- At age 18, your child will gain the right to make their own decisions unless you take legal action. This includes the right to vote, marry, obtain a credit card, consent to medical treatments, make living arrangements, and sign contracts.
- Shifting rights to young adults who cannot make informed decisions or take responsibility for their choices carries many risks.
- You may need to take legal action to protect your child if he or she cannot:
  - Recognize when a decision needs to be made
  - Think about possible options
  - Understand the consequences of decisions
  - Express his or her needs
- Explore guardianship or another form of support to protect adults who cannot make decisions on their own.

**Guardianship** - This means that one person will have the legal power to make decisions for another person, mostly used when a person is unable to make their own decisions.

**Alternatives to Guardianship** - For some individuals with disabilities, less restrictive options to legal guardianship may provide the protections needed. Examples include supported decision making, joint bank account to help with spending, durable power of attorney for health care, living will or advance medical directive.

**Estate Planning** - This means looking ahead and deciding who will care for your youth, where they will live, and the financial needs they will have. Estate planning includes writing wills and setting up special needs trusts.



(Turn over for  
**Next Steps**)

## Next Steps

- ✓ Supported decision-making includes the individual with a disability in getting help, thinking about options, making choices and letting others know what decisions they made. Learn about supported decision-making and Illinois' Supported Decision-Making Act (Public Act 102-0614), which took effect Feb. 27, 2022, at [gac.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/gac/documents/supported-decision-making/igac-supported-decision-making-bro-5-4-22.pdf](http://gac.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/gac/documents/supported-decision-making/igac-supported-decision-making-bro-5-4-22.pdf).
- ✓ Start exploring guardianship or alternatives around your child's 17th birthday. The guardianship process takes time. Be ready to file the paperwork on your child's 18th birthday.
- ✓ Read the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission's "Guide to Adult Guardianship in Illinois" at [gac.illinois.gov/osg/guide-to-adult-guardianship-in-illinois.html](http://gac.illinois.gov/osg/guide-to-adult-guardianship-in-illinois.html) and "Guardianship Fact Sheet" at [gac.illinois.gov/aboutus/guard-faq.html](http://gac.illinois.gov/aboutus/guard-faq.html). You can also call (866) 274-8023 and request to have copies mailed to you.
- ✓ Contact your DSCC Care Coordinator for available regional or local resources offering help with guardianship and special needs trusts.
- ✓ Contact an attorney with experience in setting up special needs trusts or guardianship for young people with disabilities.
  - Check with the Special Needs Alliance to find special needs planning attorneys at: [www.specialneedsalliance.org/](http://www.specialneedsalliance.org/)
- ✓ You can file forms and petitions for guardianship through each county's Circuit Court Clerk. Visit [www.illinoiscourts.gov/courts/circuit-court/circuit-court-clerks/](http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/courts/circuit-court/circuit-court-clerks/) to find your Circuit Court Clerk's contact information. Guardianship forms are often available on the Circuit Court's website under the Probate Division. You can contact IL Court Help to learn more about specific practices in your county. Call or text (833) 411-1121 or visit [www.ilcourthelp.gov/hc/en-us](http://www.ilcourthelp.gov/hc/en-us).
- ✓ Illinois Legal Aid provides legal self-help centers across the state. Visit [www.illinoislegalaid.org/get-legal-help/lshc-directory](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org/get-legal-help/lshc-directory) to find a legal self-help center in your community. You can visit a self-help center to use a computer for free, search online for answers to your legal questions, find and prepare court forms, and get other help depending on your location.
- ✓ Talk to your child's doctor about guardianship. You will need the doctor to fill out a medical report within three months prior to filing for guardianship. Remember to schedule the annual check-up with this in mind.

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# EDUCATION

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Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

# Skills Checklist - Education

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

These activities will help youth gain the skills and abilities needed to reach their highest level of independence and ability. Some of these activities may not apply to everyone.

I plan on: ☐ getting a job ☐ tech school or job training ☐ going to college ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION - Skills and Abilities	YES	NO	N/A	Need More Info
Are you in an education program (special education, gifted program, college, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you happy with your school program (class work, grade level, life skills)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have worries about your school attendance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you need reminders to start your homework?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you finish your homework without someone helping you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you go to your Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 meetings at school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you take an active part in your school IEP, 504, transition meetings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you take part in any activities at school (clubs, sports, attend school games)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you taking classes to help with becoming more independent (health class, accounting, money management, home economics)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you in work experience classes (for example, STEP) through your high school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you plan ways to meet your health needs with school staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you feel understood when you express yourself to friends, neighbors and grown-ups (teacher, boss, principal)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you need assistive technology at school (communication device, adaptive equipment, keyboard)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you ask and get the accommodations and supports you need (at school, work, community, home)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know what to do if your needs are not being met at school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know your rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you engage in activities outside of school to learn more about something you enjoy (swimming, sewing, art class, scrapbooking, dancing and others)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use a computer to browse the web, type papers or letters, email or use other software?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have plans for after high school (e.g., college, trade school, job, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know which classes to take to learn more about your planned career or job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you exploring colleges and funding for college?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Tips for Using the Skills List

Think about the skills you want to work on. Make notes of your needs and concerns. You can then talk about your next steps with the people who are helping you prepare for your future.

**Notes to Myself:** For each “Need More Info” item you checked, list questions you have or what you would like to know more about.

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**Next Steps – Goals:** List what you need to work on to help you learn how to take care of yourself in the future. You can ask the people who are helping you plan for your future to work on this with you.

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I want more information about: ☐ College disability support services ☐ Educational rights

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# Planning Your Education and Transition for Life After High School

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
School Meetings, Work and Independence



As a high school student, you play a big role in making sure you get the special education services you need. These tips can help you value this role and feel more confident by knowing your rights. By the time you are 14 1/2 years old:

- Your special education services team should invite you to your Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to discuss your goals for life after high school.
- You can request an IEP/transition planning meeting any time you are concerned about your plan.
- You should include health goals in your IEP.

You and your parents are part of your IEP team. Remember, YOU are the most important team member and should always go to your IEP meetings.

Your job is to speak up about your interests, strengths and skills and what you want to do to get ready for:

- Your future job
- Going to college or trade school
- Your desired living goals as an adult

**Special education laws** for transition services support your goals for work, further education and independent living. Knowing your rights will help you get ready for life after high school.

- You may find this guide from the Illinois State Board of Education helpful: “Educational Rights and Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education in Illinois” at [www.isbe.net/Documents/Parent-Guide-Special-Ed-Aug20.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/Documents/Parent-Guide-Special-Ed-Aug20.pdf).
- Your school should help with your therapy and healthcare needs during the school day.
- If you have any problems, ask for an IEP meeting to voice your concerns. Remember to keep written records of all you do (meetings, chats, etc.).
- If you still disagree with your school, either ask for mediation in writing or find an advocate to help you. To find an advocate, call Equip for Equality in Illinois at 1-800-537-2632.
- Invite others to your IEP meeting, such as your Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) Care Coordinator, your Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor, your Independent Service Coordinator (ISC) from the Division of Developmental Disabilities and others.
- If your IEP Team decides a transition program at a local college or in the community will best meet your needs, be sure these services are written in your IEP.
- If you have a 504 Plan, you may not have the same right to school-based transition plans that students with IEPs have. You’ll need to check with your school to see what’s offered. If your district doesn’t offer transition planning, VR services may be able to help you with work, education related to career goals and independent living.

You may find the Transition Planning Checklist on the next page helpful.

## Transition Planning Checklist

- ☐ **Confirm the date you will graduate.** Illinois law states that you are eligible for special education until the day before your 22nd birthday.
- ☐ Find out if you will receive a high school diploma or a certificate of attendance.
- ☐ Find out if you will be able to take part in the graduation ceremony.
- ☐ **If you are planning on going to college:**
  - Take your ACT or SAT in your junior year of high school.
  - Decide which college or university you want to attend.
  - Find out about financial aid to help with your tuition and other expenses.
  - Talk with a disability counselor on the college campus.
  - Plan with your doctors, school nurse, IEP team and DSCC Care Coordinator about meeting your health needs while at college.
- ☐ **If you are planning to go to work:**
  - Find out if job coaching is available. Get in touch with adult services before you graduate or “age out” to plan for services after graduation. This way you may avoid being put on a long waiting list for adult services.
  - Go to your local Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services/ Division of Developmental Disabilities/Division of Mental Health office to learn about vocational services and apply.  
Find your local office at [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12).
  - Decide on a career.
  - Find opportunities to job shadow (watching someone already doing the type of job you want to do).
  - Learn about post-high school training programs at local vocational schools, community colleges, business schools and other training schools.
  - Plan for any health accommodations you may need in the workplace. For more information, visit the Job Accommodation Network online at [askjan.org](http://askjan.org).
- ☐ **If you are going to move out on your own, start planning:**
  - Where you are going to live and how will you pay for it.
  - What furniture and housewares you will need.
  - Contact the local **Center for Independent Living** for help with planning and building skills for living on your own. Visit their website at [www.incil.org/locate/](http://www.incil.org/locate/) or call toll-free at **(800) 587-1227**.
  - Plan for what you will need and practice skills to care for your own health.
- ☐ Discuss your transportation needs. If you will need help, request and fill out applications for public transportation services.
- ☐ Request information about social/recreational opportunities for young adults with disabilities in your community. Ask for contact information.

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# Planning and Going to College

## Transition Skills, Tips & Tools Planning & Going to College



1. **Start planning early** while you are still in high school (beginning your freshman year). Make sure you take the high school classes that will help you get into college.
2. **Set goals** to help you get ready for college.
3. **Get to know your strengths, interests and learning style.** PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment can help you get started at [www.pacer.org/transition/](http://www.pacer.org/transition/).
4. **Think about who your support system will be** when you are away from home.
5. If you are 18 or older, your parents will no longer have access to your grades, course selection and so on after you register for college. It will be up to you to keep track of these things.
6. As a college student, you will need to ask for accommodations and provide documentation. This responsibility shifts to you, and you will need to communicate your needs.
7. **Choosing a college will take time.** Attend college fairs, explore on the internet, talk to friends, family and others to learn more about colleges. Schedule a campus visit with the colleges you're interested in. The Think College website provides information for persons with intellectual disabilities. The information is for transition-aged students as well as adults attending or planning for college. It provides resources and tools for students, families and professionals. Go to [thinkcollege.net](http://thinkcollege.net).
8. To be successful at college, you may want to **access assistance through the campus' Office of Disability Services.** Start by asking the school about services for students with disabilities. You can call on the phone, visit the campus or even review their website to learn about services.
9. **If you use assistive devices,** such as a wheelchair or a hearing aid, you will need to check on repair services available near the campus. This way you will be prepared if something goes wrong while you are away at college.
10. **Planning for nearby medical care is important.** If you have special healthcare needs, you should plan where you will go for health services, medications and supplies. You can ask your current physician to help identify health resources closer to campus. Your insurance provider can help find in-network health services, including equipment providers for maintenance or repairs, pharmacies and medical facilities for lab work and other services. Your DSCC care coordination team can help you plan for medical emergencies and connect you to health resources.

11. Become aware of the laws that protect students with disabilities at colleges, universities and community colleges.
  - The Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities webpage has information about admissions, accommodations, academic adjustments, documentation and discrimination under Section 504 Rehabilitation Act at [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html).
12. Talk to your family, friends and guidance counselor at school about your plans.

## Helpful Higher Education Resources

**College Navigator** is an online tool to help students and parents get information on post-secondary institutions throughout the United States - [nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/](http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/)

**PACER Center's "College or Training Programs: How to Decide"** is a tip sheet to help youth decide on a path after high school - [www.pacer.org/transition/resource-library/publications/NPC-26.pdf](http://www.pacer.org/transition/resource-library/publications/NPC-26.pdf)

**The University of Washington's DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology) Center** promotes the use of computer and networking technologies to increase independence, productivity and participation in education and employment - [www.washington.edu/doit/](http://www.washington.edu/doit/)

**Education Quest** is a website to help with college planning. They have developed a free guide, "College Planning for Student with Disabilities," that you may order or view their shorter version online. Finding a college that meets your needs will require research, campus visits and asking the right questions - [publications.educationquest.org/view/163090404/](http://publications.educationquest.org/view/163090404/)

**Going to College** is a website with information about living college life with a disability. It is designed for high school students and provides video clips, activities and resources that can help you get a head start in planning for college - [going-to-college.org](http://going-to-college.org)

**Mapping Your Future** is a free resource for career, college, financial aid and money management information. Its goal is to help individuals achieve life-long success by empowering students, families and schools with free, web-based information and services - [mappingyourfuture.org/](http://mappingyourfuture.org/)

**The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition** website is a tremendous resource for individuals planning to go to college. There are videos and inventory surveys to help you explore your strengths and interests, accept your disability and advocate for yourself. Information is presented on what campus life is like and planning for going to college - [transitionta.org/](http://transitionta.org/)

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# Planning for Accommodations at College

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
College and Accommodations



1. Start early when planning for college because it will take time.
2. Decide what type of school you want to attend: a vocational school, career school, postsecondary transition school, community college or university.
3. Contact the school and ask about services for students with disabilities. You can call on the phone, visit the campus, or even review their website to learn about services.
4. Common questions to consider asking the Campus Office of Disabilities:
  - What are the name, phone number, and hours of operation for the Office of Disabilities?
  - How far in advance should I contact the Office of Disabilities?
  - What is the process to access the Office of Disabilities' services and is there a deadline?
  - What documentation must I provide to show I am a student with a disability to get reasonable accommodations?
  - Who decides if I qualify for academic accommodations?
  - What types of accommodations are considered reasonable?
  - Is tutoring available and is there a cost?
  - Is there a support group on campus for students with disabilities?
  - Do professors have regular office hours?
  - Is there any other information I should know?

## Typical Types of Accommodations

*Accommodations vary. You should check with your individual institution to learn what is available.*

Instruction	Testing
Adaptive aids	Assistive technology
Adaptive furniture (desk)	Computer-read test
Assistive technology	Contrasts in ink and paper
Enlarged text	Enlarged text
Extra time on assignments	Essay test vs. multiple choice test
Reader (talking tapes or person reading)	Extended time
Selective seating	Misspellings not graded
Sign language interpreter	Printed copy of oral instructions
Someone to take notes	Someone to read the test
Tape record information	Scribe (someone to write down answers)
Tutor	Tape-recorded lectures, tests
Typist	Quiet environment, no distractions

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# How to Get Help Paying for College

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Paying for College



1. Contact the colleges or universities (by phone or their website) where you are interested in enrolling and ask about:
  - The cost of attendance, including the breakdown of tuition and fees, room and board, travel, books and supplies, and personal and miscellaneous expenses.
  - The types of financial assistance available.
  - The steps and timeframes for submitting applications for assistance.
  - The criteria institutions use to award financial aid.
  - The interest rates on various student loans, the total amount you must repay, the length of time to repay, when to start repaying, and what cancellations (deferments) apply.
  - Other conditions that affect financial assistance.
2. **Mapping Your Future** is a free resource for career, college, financial aid, and money management information. Their goal is to help individuals achieve lifelong success by empowering students, families, and schools with free, web-based information and services at [mappingyourfuture.org/](https://mappingyourfuture.org/).
3. **Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** at [studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa](https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa).
4. **Explore more funding sources** to help pay for college.

**Go to the next page for ideas and scholarship information.**



# Financial Resources for Postsecondary Education

Scholarship	Website and Contact Information	Description
Federal Student Aid	<a href="https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa">studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa</a>	Financial help for students enrolled in eligible programs at participating schools. Includes tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. Most federal aid is need-based. The three most common types of aid are grants, loans, and work-study.
FinAid	<a href="https://finaid.org/">finaid.org/</a>	A free scholarship search, including one for financial aid for students with disabilities.
College Scholarships	<a href="https://www.collegescholarships.com">www.collegescholarships.com</a>	Provides a large database of available scholarships.
Illinois College to Career	<a href="https://www.ilcollege2career.com/#/">www.ilcollege2career.com/#/</a>	A tool to review a wide range of information on Illinois two-year and four-year institutions that includes career outcomes of graduates and student debt.
General Scholarships for Students With Disabilities	<a href="https://www.collegescholarships.org/financial-aid/">www.collegescholarships.org/financial-aid/</a> Keyword Search: disabilities	A comprehensive listing of scholarships for a wide variety of individuals with disabilities.
College Funding for Students With Disabilities   DO-IT (washington.edu)	<a href="https://www.washington.edu/doit/college-funding-students-disabilities">www.washington.edu/doit/college-funding-students-disabilities</a>	Provides a lot of great information on different types of financial assistance for higher education.
Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)	<a href="https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29736">www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29736</a>  You can also call: (877) 761-9780 (Voice) (866) 264-2149 (TTY) (312) 957-4881 (VP)	DHS's Division of Rehabilitation Services is the state's lead agency serving individuals with disabilities. DRS works in partnership with people with disabilities and their families to help them make informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education, and independent living opportunities.  Are you an individual with a disability who's interested in furthering your education beyond high school? If so, then DRS may be able to help defray the costs of your education and help you achieve a successful career.

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# FINANCIAL

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Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

# Skills Checklist - Financial

These activities will help youth gain the skills and abilities needed to reach their highest level of independence and ability. Some of these activities may not apply to everyone.

Name	Date of birth	Today's date		
<b>FINANCIAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES</b> <i>Please check the answer that <u>best</u> applies now.</i>				
	YES	NO	N/A	I WANT TO LEARN
Do you know the value of money (coins and bills)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you receive an allowance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you able to count change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you pay for items at the store?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you pay or arrange payments for your medications?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a bank account?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you need a joint bank account and someone to help you oversee your money?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to write a check and/or use a debit card?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you able to balance a checkbook?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to gain credit (apply for a credit card, line of credit, loan, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know what a budget is?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know your strengths and interests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know people or agencies that can help you find a job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know what taxes are?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you manage your money and budget household expenses (housing, food, heat, phone, insurance, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how your living expenses will be paid when you become an adult?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know about special programs to help pay for job training or college?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you get financial help with school or work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you plan to work to support yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you able to fill out an application?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know about government programs for income support, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you applied for government income support (SSI) if needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a representative payee, guardian of the estate or power of attorney if needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a Special Needs Trust set up to protect your finances and program benefits if needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a will?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know the civil rights of persons with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Tips for Using This Skills List

Think about the skills you want to work on. Make notes of your needs and concerns. You can then talk about the next steps to take with the people who are helping you prepare for your future.

**Notes to Myself:** For each “Need More Info” item you checked, list questions you have or what you would like to know more about.

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**Next Steps – Goals:** List what you need to work on to help you learn how to take care of yourself in the future. You can ask the people who are helping you plan for your future to work on this with you.

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I want more information about: ☐ Insurance ☐ Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS)  
☐ SSI ☐ Benefits for Persons With a Disability  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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# Point of Entry to Services in Illinois for Individuals With Developmental Disabilities

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Register for PUNS



PUNS is the point of entry to services in Illinois for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The **Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities** uses the PUNS database to identify who needs services and what services they need.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) website has a guide for understanding PUNS at [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=47620](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=47620).

The state uses PUNS to select individuals for services **based on the urgency of their needs** as government funding becomes available.

Services available to individuals on the PUNS list include:

- ✓ In-home supports for independent living
- ✓ Respite care to provide temporary relief to caregivers
- ✓ Entry into day services, sheltered workshops or supported employment
- ✓ Training programs to teach life and work skills
- ✓ Job coaches to help with training and success in the workplace
- ✓ Emergency or long-term placement in residential living facilities
- ✓ Adaptive equipment to promote independence
- ✓ Other supports to improve quality of life

**You can learn more about the state's Developmental Disabilities Services at**  
[www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=81789](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=81789).

Children, teens and adults with developmental disabilities who need or want services or supports can enroll in PUNS.

To fill out the PUNS form, contact your local **Independent Service Coordination Agency (ISC)** and ask for an appointment to register for PUNS.

- ✓ To find your local ISC Agency, call DHS at 1-888-DD-PLANS.
- ✓ You can also find your local ISC and more details about how to sign up for PUNS services at [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=85196](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=85196).

- ✓ Review these helpful brochures:

**Understanding PUNS brochure:** [www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27897/documents/Brochures/4313.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27897/documents/Brochures/4313.pdf)

- ✓ See the DHS office locator at [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12).

During your appointment with your local ISC agency, you will meet with a pre-admission screener. He/she will ask questions about you and/or your family's needs. The screener sorts needs into two categories:

- ✓ **Seeking Services** – These services are needed within the year. This first level of prioritization looks at the age of the caregiver and whether the situation is an emergency or critical (but not a crisis).
- ✓ **Planning** – Services may be needed or desired in the future. The next level of prioritization is individuals who have aged out of special education within the last five years along with the individual's amount of time on the PUNS list.

PUNS selections are based on a person's length of time in the Seeking Services category since turning 18. Note: *if you are not in the Seeking Services category and are currently in need of supports, you must request that your ISC Agency move you to the Seeking Services category.* Learn more about the PUNS selection process and needs categories at [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=41131](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=41131).

You should update your PUNS information **yearly** or any time you needs change.

**Crisis:** Children and adults on the PUNS list who are experiencing a crisis (such as homelessness, abuse or neglect) can call their Independent Service Coordinator to request consideration of a crisis application for waiver funding.

## For more information

If you want more information about PUNS or Developmental Disabilities Waiver services, **The Arc of Illinois** has several programs to help:

- **Family to Family Health Information Center** - [www.thearcofil.org/about-us/programs/family-to-family-health-information-center-2/](http://www.thearcofil.org/about-us/programs/family-to-family-health-information-center-2/) - (866) 931-1110
- **Illinois Life Span Program** - [www.illinoislifespan.org/](http://www.illinoislifespan.org/) - (800) 588-7002
- **The Ligas Family Advocates Program** - [www.thearcofil.org/about-us/programs/ligas-family-advocate-program/](http://www.thearcofil.org/about-us/programs/ligas-family-advocate-program/) - (708) 331-7370
- **Family Support Network** - [www.thearcofil.org/about-us/programs/family-support-network/](http://www.thearcofil.org/about-us/programs/family-support-network/) - (708) 331-7370
- **The Arc Spanish Helpline** - Línea de Información en Español - (815) 464-1832, ext. 1025

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# Use SSI to Get Ready for Your Future!

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)



**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** helps to pay for your food, clothing and housing needs. It also helps you keep your medical benefits.

1. **Applying for SSI** involves many steps. If you are interested, you can get more information by calling **(800) 772-1213**.
2. **Apply or reapply for SSI when you become an adult** (around age 18).
  - You can use the Adult Disability Starter Kit at [www.ssa.gov/disability/disability\\_starter\\_kits.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits.htm). It includes a fact sheet on “What You Should Know Before You Apply For Social Security Disability Benefits,” a checklist, a worksheet and a link to an online application.
3. **Your eligibility is checked on a regular basis** based on your income and resources.
4. **SSI can help you get one step closer to working:**
  - It can help you get money every month for your food, clothing and housing needs.
  - Less than half of the money you earn from work is counted against your SSI check.
  - When you work, you can keep your Healthcare and Family Services’ healthcare coverage.
  - Using a **Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS)** will let you set aside money to help you achieve a work goal and become independent.
  - You can deduct your work-related costs from your earnings.
5. **Work incentives** are a great way to join the workforce. You will likely make more money than you receive on SSI.
6. **You can learn more** at the SSI Work Site at [www.socialsecurity.gov/work/index.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work/index.html) or by calling **(800) 772-1213**.



7. If you already get SSI and want to learn more about work incentives, call your **Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Program**.

If you live in the below counties, contact: **Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) - (800) 852-5110**.

Alexander	Bond	Calhoun	Champaign	Christian	Clark
Clay	Clinton	Coles	Crawford	Cumberland	DeWitt
Douglas	DuPage	Edgar	Edwards	Effingham	Fayette
Ford	Franklin	Gallatin	Greene	Grundy	Hamilton
Hardin	Iroquois	Jackson	Jasper	Jefferson	Jersey
Johnson	Kane	Kankakee	Kendall	Lake	Lawrence
Livingston	Logan	Macon	Macoupin	Madison	Marion
Massac	McHenry	McLean	Monroe	Montgomery	Moultrie
Perry	Piatt	Pike	Pope	Pulaski	Randolph
Richland	Saline	Sangamon	Shelby	St. Clair	Union
Vermilion	Wabash	Washington	Wayne	White	Will
Williamson					

If you live in the below counties, contact: **Disability Works Iowa - (800) 779-2502**.

Adams	Boone	Brown	Bureau	Carroll	Cass
DeKalb	Fulton	Hancock	Henderson	Henry	JoDaviess
Knox	LaSalle	Lee	Marshall	Mason	McDonough
Menard	Mercer	Morgan	Ogle	Peoria	Putnam
Rock Island	Schuyler	Scott	Stark	Stephenson	Tazewell
Warren	Whiteside	Winnebago	Woodford		

If you live in **Cook County**, contact: **Volunteers of America - (312) 896-3220**.

8. **If you have already applied for benefits in the past and were denied, don't give up!**

In fact, most people are initially denied when they apply on their own. You can still reapply or appeal the denial with the help of a qualified Social Security disability advocate or attorney. You can contact Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security, Equip for Equality, Inc., at **(800) 537-2632** (Voice) or **(800) 610-2779** (TTY).

9. SSI provides minimum basic financial help to persons with disabilities (regardless of age) with very limited income and resources. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) supports individuals who are disabled and have a qualifying work history, either through their own employment or a family member (spouse/parent). Learn more about SSI versus SSDI at [www.ncoa.org/article/ssi-vs-ssdi-what-are-these-benefits-how-they-differ](http://www.ncoa.org/article/ssi-vs-ssdi-what-are-these-benefits-how-they-differ).

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# Money Management Skills

## Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

### Managing Money, Budgeting and Setting Up Credit



As you transition to adulthood, you can begin to manage (or co-manage) your own money.

1. **Start a checking account** (or a joint account). Regular deposits show responsibility. Learn how to track your spending and deposits and compare them with your bank's records. Balancing your account is among the best money management habits you can keep. You may find this online tool helpful: [mappingyourfuture.org/money/checkbook.cfm](https://mappingyourfuture.org/money/checkbook.cfm).
2. You should establish good credit to help you receive financial assistance, such as a car loan or a credit card, in the future.

No credit history can lead to the same set of problems as a bad credit history. These steps can help you achieve a good credit history:

- **Establish a Joint Account.** Your parents can add you to their account. The credit history is reflected on both your account and your parents'.
- **Start a Savings Account.** Regular deposits with limited withdrawals can create a line of credit.
- Check with your local bank or department store if they report the credits to the credit bureau. **Consider applying for a small loan at the bank or a credit card from the local department store.** You will need a co-signer if you are younger than 18. It is better to find a loan with terms you can meet without undue financial strain.

3. **Creating a budget** is a good way to manage your money. It helps you track your spending and make sure you're using your money how you want. (You may find this tool helpful: [mappingyourfuture.org/money/budgetcalculator.cfm](https://mappingyourfuture.org/money/budgetcalculator.cfm).)

There are three steps to make a budget:

- Identify how you're spending money now.
- Gauge your current spending and set long-term financial goals.
- Track your spending.

4. You can get help with applying for benefits and making a budget at your local **Center for Independent Living**. To find a center, go to [www.incil.org/locate/](http://www.incil.org/locate/). You can also call toll-free at **(800) 587-1227**.
5. **Explore your career options early and while in high school.** Finding gainful employment is an important part of adult life. Unemployment can lead to poverty, lower health status and dependency on government programs.
6. **When you begin earning your own income, you will need to file income taxes.** Your Center for Independent Living may know of a free resource in your community to help you complete and file taxes.



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# INDEPENDENCE

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Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

# Skills Checklist - Adult Living Arrangements/Self-Reliant

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

These activities will help youth gain the skills to become more self-reliant and ready for their desired adult living arrangements. Some of these activities may not apply to everyone.

**I plan on living:** ☐ with my parents ☐ on my own ☐ group home ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

INDEPENDENCE - Skills and Abilities	YES	NO	N/A	Need More Info
Do you do your share of family chores (clean up after yourself, set the table, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you learning to do things around the house (laundry, fixing meals, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you keep home and/or room clean or clean up after meals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use nearby stores and services (know what to buy, where to find things, and how to pay for groceries)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you help plan or fix meals or food?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you spent nights away from your family (camp, sleepover with friends, school trips)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you happy with how you are able to get around (home to school or work)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you call and use community services (accessible transportation) and advocacy services (legal services) when you need them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a plan for your adult living arrangements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to go places on your own (bus, follow directions or maps)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a state identification (ID) card or driver's license?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you manage your own money (make change, use debit or checks, balance checkbook, follow a budget)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you explored housing that can meet your health and safety needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know your fair housing rights under the Fair Housing Act?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a plan for accommodations, such as housekeeping help or a personal assistant, if needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to locate disability support and counseling services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you need help making major decisions with living or health care?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a legal guardian or power of attorney, if needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Continue Checklist on Next Page**

NUTRITION - Skills and Abilities	YES	NO	N/A	Need More Info
Do you eat a variety of foods (or take tube feedings well)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you able to feed yourself (or do tube feedings) once your food is set on the table?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you fix a meal without help?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know about the need for good nutrition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you happy with your weight?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PERSONAL CARE - Skills and Abilities	YES	NO	N/A	Need More Info
Do you brush and floss your own teeth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you dress yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you bathe yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you brush/fix your own hair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have regular sleep times and feel rested?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how much sleep you need each day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you put yourself to bed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you wake up on your own (with the alarm clock)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PERSONAL HYGIENE - Skills and Abilities	YES	NO	N/A	Need More Info
Can you tell when you need to go to the bathroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you go to the bathroom on your own?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you handle your clothing, wipe yourself and flush the toilet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you need a personal assistant to help you with activities of daily living?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MOBILITY/EXERCISE - Skills and Abilities	YES	NO	N/A	Need More Info
Can you get out of the bed, tub or shower on your own?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you exercise on a regular basis (walk, lift weights, stretching exercises, swim, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Tips for Using the Skills List

Think about the skills you want to work on. Make notes of your needs and concerns. You can then talk about the next steps with the people who are helping you prepare for your future.

**Notes to Myself:** For each “Need More Info” item you checked, list questions you have or what you would like to know more about.

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**Next Steps – Goals:** List what you need to work on to help you learn how to take care of yourself in the future. You can ask the people who are helping you plan for your future to work on this with you.

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I want more information about: ☐ Adult living arrangements ☐ Transportation

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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# We Make Decisions Every Day, Big and Little

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

*Solving Problems and Making Your Own Decisions*



1. **Learning to make good decisions is a skill that can help you** grow up and be more independent and responsible as an adult.
2. **Parents play a critical role** in supporting children as they learn to make decisions on their own. Decision-making is an incredibly important skill. Parents should help their children develop their own decision-making abilities so they can achieve greater independence. Allowing your teen to identify a problem, figure out solutions, and come to a conclusion will give them confidence and problem-solving skills. These skills will serve them well for the rest of their lives.
3. **Build your decision-making skills.** This process takes time, patience and practice.
4. **Study which decisions get you more of what you want** (more fun, independence, time with friends, control over your daily life, etc.). Also note **which decisions lead to what you do not want** (arguments with parents, conflicts with peers, social drama, loss of privileges, adults telling you what to do, etc.). This process will help you learn to make good decisions.
5. **Learn from mistakes.** Choices always have consequences, some good and some bad. Mistakes play a very important role in life. Any mistake is an opportunity to learn how to handle a situation better the next time. It is not an opportunity for an adult to criticize. Parents should stay involved in this process and help model proper actions.
6. **Work through the decision-making steps and make more of your own decisions.** You can use the SODAS model below to help remember some of these steps:

**S** = Situation  
**O** = Options  
**D** = Disadvantages  
**A** = Advantages  
**S** = Solution

7. **Keep a decision journal** to write down and review all the decisions made during the day. A journal can help you see how well you handled decisions and learn how to do better, if needed.
8. **For more information** on building good decision-making skills, check out:
  - Decision-making (SODAS Method) resources to help your child make better decisions in any situation, [www.smarterparenting.com/decision-making-education/](http://www.smarterparenting.com/decision-making-education/).
  - Fact Sheet: “Decision Making/Problem Solving With Teens,” [ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/pdf/5301.pdf](http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/pdf/5301.pdf).
  - American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU): “When Do I Want Support?” tool can help identify your support needs, [www.aclu.org/other/when-do-i-want-support](http://www.aclu.org/other/when-do-i-want-support). The information in this form can help you fill out a Supported Decision-Making Agreement, if needed. Another resource is the ACLU’s “Know Your Rights” page at [www.aclu.org/know-your-rights](http://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights).
  - The Arc’s Center for Future Planning at [futureplanning.thearc.org/](http://futureplanning.thearc.org/) provides information and tools to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities make decisions. Handouts include:
    - “Decision-Making Plan Tool,” [thearc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Future-Decision-Center-for-Future-Planning.pdf](http://thearc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Future-Decision-Center-for-Future-Planning.pdf).
    - “Decision-Making Supports,” <https://thearc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Decision-Making-Supports-Center-for-Future-Planning-1.pdf>.
  - Illinois’ Supported Decision-Making Act ensures people with disabilities can get the help they need to make decisions for their own lives. The Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission has many resources to explain the Supported Decision-Making Act. Use the search term “supported decision-making” at [www.illinois.gov/search-results.html?q=supported+decision+making&contentType=everything](http://www.illinois.gov/search-results.html?q=supported+decision+making&contentType=everything).

## Steps to Decision-Making and Problem Solving

1. What problem do you need to solve? (Or state the problem.)

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2. Why is this a problem?

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3. What are my desired results? (What do I want to see happen?)

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4. List three possible solutions. (What can I do to get my desired results?) As you look at these, ask yourself:
- a.) How will I feel afterward?
  - b.) How will others I value feel about me after this decision?
  - c.) Would I suggest the same solution to a friend?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Look at your first solution. List what may happen if you go with number 1.

\_\_\_\_\_

Look at your second solution. List what may happen if you go with number 2.

\_\_\_\_\_

Look at your third solution. List what may happen if you go with number 3.

\_\_\_\_\_

Which one works best for solving the problem? Pick from numbers 1, 2 or 3.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Is this the best time to make this decision?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What resources do I need to carry out my choice?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Try out your chosen idea and test it. Did it solve the problem?

\_\_\_\_\_

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# Preparing for Adult Living

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools



## Everyone Has Limitations

It's important to make the most of your abilities and acknowledge your limitations. This understanding will help you know where you can improve and where you need accommodations. Becoming self-determined involves figuring out when and how to get the help you need.

You have the power to improve your quality of life. Steps you can take include:

- Learn ways to take care of your needs and know when to ask for help.
- Start setting your own goals and build decision-making skills.
- Know your personal care needs (such as bathing, teeth brushing, grooming, shaving, toileting) and how you will take care of them.
- Learn what you need help with and set up ways to get that help. For example, you may need an attendant to help you in the mornings and evenings with your personal care. More details on available home services is at [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29738](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29738).
- Carry your own identification card.  
Examples: school picture ID, Illinois Person with a Disability ID Card, library card.
- Learn how to work appliances such as the microwave, stove, dishwasher, coffee maker, toaster, and washer and dryer.
- Start doing your own laundry.
- Do housekeeping activities, such as dusting, vacuuming/sweeping, mopping, cleaning the sink, toilet, bathtub/shower.
- Start shopping for food items you need to make a meal. Make a list of food items to take with you to the grocery store. Find the items you need in the store and pay the cashier.
- Learn to manage your own money.
- Find out how much things cost, such as utilities, rent, insurance, food, clothing, transportation, etc.

- Know your rights for fair housing. More information is available from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development website, Information for Disabled Persons: [www.hud.gov/topics/information\\_for\\_disabled\\_persons](http://www.hud.gov/topics/information_for_disabled_persons).
- Ask your friends and family to help you learn the skills to be able to do things on your own.
- Learn about adaptive equipment that can make your everyday life easier. Ask your healthcare providers and educators for more information. The Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) supports people with disabilities with assistive technology for daily living, device loans, a demonstration center, a loan program for funding and much more at [www.iltech.org/](http://www.iltech.org/). You can also call toll-free at (800) 852-5110 (voice) or dial 711 for Illinois Relay Services.
- Practice cooking some basic meals for yourself. See a few helpful tips below.

## Are You Ready to Make Your Own Meals?

**You can learn to make your own meals with these easy steps:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ✓ Watch someone making snacks.         | ✓ Help with fixing a meal.   |
| ✓ Make your own snacks.                | ✓ Learn to use a timer.  |
| ✓ Make a cold sandwich.                | ✓ Follow recipe directions.  |
| ✓ Push buttons for microwave use.      | ✓ Pick out foods for a meal.   |
| ✓ Learn to use the oven/stove safely.  | ✓ Learn to stir or use a mixer.  |
| ✓ Use the oven/microwave with help.    | ✓ Clean the area where food was or is going to be prepared.                      |
| ✓ Work the oven/microwave on your own. | ✓ Find all ingredients.  |
| ✓ Warm-up leftovers or frozen dinners. | ✓ Put ingredients away after use.  |
| ✓ Sort foods by food groups.           | ✓ Open and close containers. Use adaptive can openers or lid closers, if needed. |
|  | ✓ Choose the right size pot or pan to use.                                       |

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# Chores for Teens

## Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

### Chores



**It's important for you to help around the house.**

**As you get older and learn new tasks, think about ways you can use these new skills to help at home:**

- Baking can be a great way to practice math.
- Folding laundry can be great experience for working in a clothing store.
- Looking through digital coupons and using grocery store apps are good ways to work on organization and money management.
- Vacuuming helps to build muscles and hand-eye coordination.
- Cooking is a great way to learn the importance of healthy eating.
- Doing laundry to keep your clothes clean and tidy is a great way to make a good first impression for a job interview.

**Be creative to find ways to modify tasks to do as much as you can on your own.**

**Your family will count on you to help with chores.** As everyone chips in, there may be more time for family fun.

**Being responsible for chores at home can lead to being responsible for tasks at a job and greater independence as an adult.**

You may also find the following websites helpful with deciding on chores:

- **“Twelve Skills and Five Household Chores that Build Vocational Skills”** - [leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/12-skills-and-5-household-chores-that-can-serve-as-preparation-for-future-vocation/full/](https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/12-skills-and-5-household-chores-that-can-serve-as-preparation-for-future-vocation/full/)

You may want to ask your parent/caregiver to help support you with learning a new task. If they want to learn more about ways to help, go to:

- **“Over 50 Ideas of Chores for Teens”** is a brief article on giving directions and what these activities can accomplish (goals, life skills, etc.) - [verywellfamily.com/over-50-ideas-of-chores-for-teens-2609291](https://verywellfamily.com/over-50-ideas-of-chores-for-teens-2609291)

- Pages 14-15 of “Fostering Self-Determination Among Children and Youth with Disabilities” - [waismanucced.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/74/2017/05/FosteringSelfDetermination.pdf](http://waismanucced.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/74/2017/05/FosteringSelfDetermination.pdf).
- “Household Chores for Adolescents” - [www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Household-Chores-for-Adolescents.aspx?\\_gl=1\\*1isihfy\\*\\_ga\\*MjgzODQ1NDI4LjE3MjYxNjkyNjk.\\*\\_ga\\_FD9D3XZVQQ\\*MTcyODQxMDkyMS4yLjAuMTcyODQxMDkyMS4wLjAuMA](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Household-Chores-for-Adolescents.aspx?_gl=1*1isihfy*_ga*MjgzODQ1NDI4LjE3MjYxNjkyNjk.*_ga_FD9D3XZVQQ*MTcyODQxMDkyMS4yLjAuMTcyODQxMDkyMS4wLjAuMA)
- “Strategies for Chores” - [life-skills.middletownautism.com/strategies/work/household-chores/strategies-for-chores/#top](http://life-skills.middletownautism.com/strategies/work/household-chores/strategies-for-chores/#top)

## Home Living Activities: Housekeeping Skills & Laundry

As you grow older, you learn new tasks that help bring you closer to independence as an adult. You may or may not already be able to do some or all these activities. This checklist simply gives you ideas to help build your independence skills.

### Kitchen - Keep Kitchen Clean

- ☐ Set the table for meals
- ☐ Take the dishes to the sink
- ☐ Wipe down the table after use
- ☐ Wash the dishes in the sink/load the dishwasher
- ☐ Dry the dishes/put them away
- ☐ Take out the garbage
- ☐ Sweep the floor
- ☐ Know when to mop the floor

### Bedroom - Keep Bedroom Neat

- ☐ Pick up belongings
- ☐ Make bed
- ☐ Dust furniture
- ☐ Vacuum carpet/sweep floor
- ☐ Put dirty clothes in the hamper
- ☐ Know when to change sheets
- ☐ Put clean sheets on the bed

### Laundry - Keep Clothing Clean and Neat

- ☐ Gather dirty clothes/bed sheets
- ☐ Sort whites from colors
- ☐ Load washer/dryer
- ☐ Learn how to use detergent/softener
- ☐ Choose setting for washer/dryer with help and then without help
- ☐ Check lint trap - empty if needed
- ☐ Fold clothes
- ☐ Put clothes away with help and then without help

### Bathroom - Keep Germs from Spreading

- ☐ Identify cleaning products
- ☐ Choose appropriate cleaning products
- ☐ Clean the sink, toilet, bathtub/shower
- ☐ Sweep/vacuum and mop the floors

### Yard Work - Keep the Yard Looking Nice

- ☐ Learn to use lawn equipment
- ☐ Mow grass, trim bushes, rake leaves, pick up sticks, weed

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# Adolescence: A Time of Great Changes for Both Teens and Parents

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Adolescent Development



**As you transition from childhood to adulthood**, you will undergo many physical, emotional and behavioral changes. You may be worried or confused by these changes.

**You are an individual** with a unique personality, special interests, likes and dislikes.

**You'll develop at your own speed.** The tasks and skills you master tell what stage you are in. Teens of the same age are often at different developmental stages.

**Teen development can be divided into two stages: young teens (12 to 14 years) and teenagers (15 to 17 years).** Each stage has a series of tasks to face. You may find the **ACT (Assets Coming Together) for Youth Center** site helpful at [actforyouth.net/adolescence/](https://actforyouth.net/adolescence/). Some teen development tasks are:

- **Moving toward independence.**

- It is common to struggle with your sense of identity. You may feel awkward or strange about yourself and your body. Your interests and clothing style are often influenced by your peer group.
- As you move toward higher education or into the job market, it is important for you to learn how to advocate (speak up) for yourself.

- **Meeting basic needs.**

You may have questions about how to make a living, how to manage time and how to plan meaningful activities. Young people have a strong need for:

- Community.
- Having a sense of meaning in life.
- Physical and emotional security, i.e., having a basic structure in relationships and living.

- **Coping with stress.**

The emotional and social changes you experience can make it hard to cope with challenges at school and at work. Coping with stress is linked to other skills, such as problem-solving and self-confidence.

- Ways to lower stress include relaxation techniques, managing ‘self-talk’, focusing, using support systems, and active decision-making and planning.
- Friends provide emotional support, but this is a time when friendship patterns are changing.
- It helps to talk about your feelings. You may choose to talk with your doctors, teachers, members of the clergy, or other adults who know you well. If needed, you can also find a specialist such as a counselor.

- **Information and information access.**

You will need up-to-date information on careers, education programs and job trends. You will also need to develop skills to assess the importance of the information.

As you get older, you will still need your parents for emotional, material and informational support. At the same time, your parents should allow you enough room to develop your own sense of identity.

A teenager’s quest for independence is normal and should not be seen by the parent as rejection or a loss of control.

Parents can expect their teen to test rules and limits. Keep open lines of communication clear and negotiable. Limits or boundaries may help lessen major conflicts.

Parents are usually the first to recognize a problem with emotions or behavior.

Parents can help with these changes by helping their teen find a sense of purpose and understanding of how they are meeting their current and future needs. School counselors, peer counselors and mentors can help clarify these issues. This type of help can build resilience and make it easier at school and work.

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# Home-Based Supports, Day Programs and Housing Options

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools



**Explore your options.** This will help you and your family/guardian choose programs and services that best suit your needs. It will also help meet your transition goals and allow you to live as independently as possible in the community of your choice.

**You should plan early.** Getting into adult service programs may take months. Accessing adult services will be much different than getting services through your school. The process will take time, many phone calls and much follow-up and appeals. Try not to get discouraged. Don't give up!

**You will need to plan how to pay for** your future services, trainings, supports and your living arrangements. Adult service options and funding sources are much different than child-focused services and funding. Some differences are:

- Government-funded programs for adults are very limited.
- You must meet the program's eligibility guidelines to get services.
- There are waiting lists, applications, disability determinations and other processes required.

**In-Home Support Options.** You may want to apply for one of nine Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver programs to get services to help you live more independently in your family's home or on your own. For more information about the HCBS Waiver programs, refer to the "Get Financial Help" section on the next page.

## Some in-home supports provided are:

- Homemaker
- Help with nursing or personal care
- Respite care
- A personal case manager
- Non-medical transportation
- Emergency home response
- Environmental accessibility adaptations
- Specialized medical equipment and supplies
- Home-delivered meals

— **Day Programs** include activities to foster skill-building, appropriate behavior, greater independence and personal choice. They may include daily living skills instruction, community outings, vocational training, employment opportunities and recreation.

**Residential Living for People with Disabilities.** We understand that many families plan to care for their children with a disability long-term. We also recognize that living situations and unexpected events may happen. Having a plan in advance may help ensure your adult child's needs will be met in your absence. You may need to consider the following options.

These options include a range of settings that help individuals with disabilities live with their own families or in their own homes with supportive services from community-based supported living service providers.

- **Independent living** - You live on your own.
- **Semi-independent living** - You need minimal levels of help to live and work in the community. Some hire a personal assistant or have roommates who share responsibilities. Family members may take turns to help out.
- **Community-Integrated Living Arrangements (CILA) or group homes** - Residential options for those needing caretaker support or 24-hour care that is provided in a variety of settings. Most are home-like settings located in communities where individuals have:
  - Support staff available as needed
  - Supervision and help with the activities of daily living
  - Access to local stores, libraries and restaurants
- **Nursing Home or Intermediate Care Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled (ICF/DD)** - Healthcare facilities for people who need ongoing developmental services and intermittent skilled nursing care.
- **State institutions** - For individuals with the most severe disabilities who need intensive services.

## Get Financial Help for Needed Supports

### Home and Community-Based Services Waiver Programs

- **Persons with Developmental Disabilities — Home and Community-Based Services Waiver** - Register for the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) through the Department of Human Services (IDHS) Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). Call your area's Independent Service Coordination (ISC) agency at **1-888-DDPLANS**, (888) 337-5267 or (866) 376-8446 (TTY). You can also check at [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=32253](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=32253).
- **Persons with Disabilities — Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Home Services Program** - This waiver serves individuals with severe physical disabilities. A fact sheet on the Home and Community-Based Services Waiver/Home Services Program is available at [hfs.illinois.gov/medicalclients/hcbs/disabilities.html](http://hfs.illinois.gov/medicalclients/hcbs/disabilities.html). For more information, contact the Division of Rehabilitation Services at (800) 843-6154, (800) 447-6404 (TTY) or [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29738](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29738).

- **Persons with Brain Injuries — Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Home Services Program** - A fact sheet on the Home and Community-Based Services Waiver/Home Services Program is available at [hfs.illinois.gov/medicalclients/hcbs/bi.html](https://hfs.illinois.gov/medicalclients/hcbs/bi.html). For more information, contact the Division of Rehabilitation Services at (800) 843-6154, (800) 447-6404 (TTY) or [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29764](https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29764).

### Find Supported Living Arrangements:

- Find and ask about **unique group arrangements** funded by the residents' families. Such families pool their resources to provide supportive living arrangements in single-family homes for their family members with disabilities who need help with daily living skills.
- Contact your area's **Center for Independent Living (CIL)** for a wide array of independent living services. For more information, visit [www.incil.org/](http://www.incil.org/) or call (800) 587-1227.
- **Know your rights for fair housing.** Visit the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's disability-related topics page at [www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/disability\\_main](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/disability_main).
- **In-Home Support Options.** You may want to apply for one of nine Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver programs to get services to help you live more independently in your family's home or on your own. For more information about the HCBS Waiver programs, visit [hfs.illinois.gov/medicalclients/hcbs.html](https://hfs.illinois.gov/medicalclients/hcbs.html).

### Other Resources

- The **Illinois Assistive Technology Program** - Promotes available assistive technology services. Call (800) 852-5110 or visit [iltech.org/](http://iltech.org/).
- **Supported Living Facilities — Illinois Supported Living Program** - Offers housing with support services to persons with physical disabilities (22 and older), depending on the population served by the facility. This is a Department of Healthcare and Family Services waiver program that allows for supported living services that include personal care, homemaking, laundry, medication supervision, social activities, recreation and 24-hour staff. **The resident is responsible for paying the cost of room and board at the facility.** For more information, see the fact sheet at [hfs.illinois.gov/medicalclients/hcbs.html](https://hfs.illinois.gov/medicalclients/hcbs.html) or call (217) 782-0545.
- **Habitat for Humanity** may be able to help you identify accessible and affordable housing. Go to [www.habitat.org/getinv/apply.aspx](https://www.habitat.org/getinv/apply.aspx) to find Habitat services in your local area. You can use the Habitat online search tool or call them at (800) 422-4828.
- **Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois** - Supports independent living services across Illinois. For more information, call (217) 744-7777 (V/TTY) or go to [silcofillinois.org/](https://silcofillinois.org/).

### We're here to help.

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# Adolescence Changing Roles

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
*"Things just aren't the same."*



- Adolescence is a time of change for the whole family. These changes can be a challenge for everyone.
- Healthy mental, emotional and behavioral (MEB) development is very important for a productive adulthood.
- Many things change during adolescence, both physically and emotionally:
  - Bodies change and hormones run rampant
  - Values and attitudes vary from day to day
  - Independence and freedom become very important
  - Relationships with family and friends change
- Family roles change and outside influences play a bigger role in a teen's life. Even though friends play a big role, family is still important.
- One of the biggest changes and challenges in adolescence is more risk-taking. Taking risks is an important part of growing up. Trying new things gives teens a chance to have experiences that will help their transition to adult life.
- Encouraging healthy risks and noting negative risks (like substance use or driving dangerously) help build skills needed to assess and cope with risk. It is important to provide learning opportunities that include healthy risks such as:
  - Starting a new sport or art project
  - Taking challenging classes
  - Getting involved with the community
- Some teens may have more moodiness, impulsive behavior, anxiety about growing up and sexual feelings. These experiences can cause:
  - Depression, which is not normal
  - Temper flare-ups and more disagreements with adults
  - Wanting to stay a child or grow up faster
  - Increased thoughts about peers and sex
- Teens may need encouragement and support as they develop new ways to cope during this time of change.

Learn more at: <https://opa.hhs.gov/adolescent-health?tag/resources/multimedia/index.html>

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To learn more about the Division of Specialized Care for Children's programs and services, check out our website at: **[dsc.uic.edu](https://dsc.uic.edu)**





# Home Fire Safety

## Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

### Fire Safety



- Each floor in your home should have a smoke and carbon monoxide detector AND a fire extinguisher.
- Every member of your family should know how to get out (know the exits, windows, doors) of every room in your home at any time of day.
- Your family should talk about your Family Emergency Plan at least every six months:
  - Discuss how each member will get out of the home (day and night from every room).
  - Plan a meeting spot (such as by the mailbox, on the front sidewalk, at the end of the driveway) where everyone can meet after getting out of your home.
- Replace batteries in your smoke alarms every six months.
- These resources may help you plan for emergencies:
  - Home Fire Prevention and Safety Tips from the American Red Cross: [www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/fire.html](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/fire.html)
  - National Fire Protection Association: [www.nfpa.org/downloadable-resources/safety-tip-sheets/home-safety-for-people-with-disabilities-tip-sheet](http://www.nfpa.org/downloadable-resources/safety-tip-sheets/home-safety-for-people-with-disabilities-tip-sheet)
  - Fire Safety for People with Disabilities: [www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires/at-risk-audiences/people-with-disabilities/?\\_gl=1\\*1lupmyv\\*\\_ga\\*MTkzOTk5ODkxLjE3Mjg1MDkyNzA.\\*\\_ga\\_KBPD43V3RV\\*MTcyODUwOTI2OS4xLjAuMTcyODUwOTI2OS4wLjAuMA](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires/at-risk-audiences/people-with-disabilities/?_gl=1*1lupmyv*_ga*MTkzOTk5ODkxLjE3Mjg1MDkyNzA.*_ga_KBPD43V3RV*MTcyODUwOTI2OS4xLjAuMTcyODUwOTI2OS4wLjAuMA)

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# Staying Healthy

## Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

### Exercise



**Find an exercise activity you like to do.** Examples are:

- Soccer
- Baseball/softball
- Gardening
- Going to the gym
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Fishing
- Hiking, walking
- Biking
- Track

**Teens of all ages and abilities can improve their quality of life through regular, moderate physical activity.**

**For youth and young adults like yourself, the 2019 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, [health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_2nd\\_edition.pdf](https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf), recommend:**

- You should do one hour (60 minutes) or more of physical activity every day.
- Most of the one hour or more a day should be either moderate-intensity or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity.
- As part of your daily physical activity, you should do vigorous-intensity activities at least three days per week. You also should do muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activities at least three days per week.
- Work with your doctor to identify the types and amounts of physical activity appropriate for you if you have special healthcare needs/disabilities. When possible, you should meet the three points above or as much activity as your condition allows. You should avoid being inactive.

**More Resources on Next Page**

**The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability** has resources, exercise videos, adapted exercises, fact sheets, leisure activity suggestions and much more. Check out their website at [www.nchpad.org/index.php](http://www.nchpad.org/index.php), call toll-free at **(800) 900-8086** or email [email@nchpad.org](mailto:email@nchpad.org).

**It is very important to keep active.**

**Please talk to your doctor before starting any new activity program that could be strenuous.**

**Check to see if your health insurance covers a fitness membership at a local gym or other fitness activities.**



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# SOCIAL

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Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

# Skills Checklist - Social

Name

Age

Date

These activities will help youth gain the skills and abilities needed to reach their highest level of independence and ability. Some of these activities may not apply to everyone.

## COMMUNICATION - Skills and Abilities

YES

NO

N/A

Need  
More  
Info

Can you explain your needs to others and ask for help when needed?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Are persons close to you, like family, friends, and teachers, able to understand your needs?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Are other people outside of home and school able to understand what you want?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Do you know the Human Rights Act says you cannot be denied or refused the use of any public place (restaurants, theaters, museums, libraries, parks, zoos, etc.)?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Do you know how to stand up for your rights (file a complaint)?

☐
☐
☐
☐

## SOCIAL - Skills and Abilities

YES

NO

N/A

Need  
More  
Info

Do you have fun every day (reading, playing, singing, etc.)?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Do you join in family activities (playing games, reading together, going to sports events, etc.)?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Do you spend time away from home (shopping, overnights with friends or relatives, etc.)?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Do you spend time with others about your same age?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Do you have close friends?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Do you have friends who don't have disabilities?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Do you have someone to talk to when you are sad, upset or things aren't going well?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Do you belong to clubs, groups, church, etc.?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Are you a leader in your community (team captain, event leader, head of a committee)?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Do you help out or work without pay away from your home?

☐
☐
☐
☐

Continue Checklist on Next Page

TRAVEL - Skills and Abilities	YES	NO	N/A	Need More Info
Do you know how to cross the street safely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you follow directions to get someplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you read a map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you wear your seat belt in the car?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a state ID card or driver's license?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to use public transportation (busses, trains, taxis, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you move about in your community easily?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know the laws about access to public places in the Americans with Disabilities Act?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have or plan to get a driver's license?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to use public transportation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PET CARE - Skills and Abilities	YES	NO	N/A	Need More Info
Do you feed and care for a pet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you clean your pet and clean up after your pet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SAFETY - Skills and Abilities	YES	NO	N/A	Need More Info
Do you know how to call 911 and provide information in case of an emergency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to practice "stranger danger"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to keep from getting pregnant, HIV/AIDS, or other diseases spread by sex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RECREATION - Skills and Abilities	YES	NO	N/A	Need More Info
Are you a sports fan (watch and talk about sports)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you play sports?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you get exercise at least several times a week so that you stay fit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you a leader in any sports or other groups or activities (team captain, classroom monitor)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Tips for Using the Skills List

Think about the skills you want to work on. Make notes of your needs and concerns. You can then talk about the next steps with the people who are helping you prepare for your future.

**Notes to Myself:** For each “Need More Info” item you checked, list questions you have or what you would like to know more about.

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**Next Steps – Goals:** List what you need to work on to help you learn how to take care of yourself in the future. You can ask the people who are helping you plan for your future to work on this with you.

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I want more information about: ☐ Recreation Programs ☐ Community Activities  
☐ Safety Programs

### We're here to help.

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# It's Great to be Involved!

## Sports, Camps, Trainings, Volunteering...

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
*Leisure Activities and Community Involvement*



1. Belonging is a very strong feeling that a person experiences when they are valued by others.
2. Being involved in group or structured activities is a great way for teens to:
  - ✓ Enhance self-awareness and a deeper sense of self. These skills help you see and understand who you are relative to the world around you. Self-awareness is the first step toward defining your goals.
  - ✓ Explore personal interests.
  - ✓ Develop social skills.
  - ✓ Have access to resources and activities.
3. Being with peers is also important for:
  - ✓ Learning how to get along with each other and how to problem solve.
  - ✓ Having more diversity in relationships.
  - ✓ Enjoying more opportunities to learn, grow and make informed choices.
4. Community participation can help you be successful by:
  - ✓ Fostering opportunities and excitement to contribute and be part of the community.
  - ✓ Providing resources to do and achieve things that are important to you.
  - ✓ Inspiring you to share your gifts and talents with the community.
5. Participation can challenge your abilities and help you achieve your goals.
6. Take these steps to get involved:
  - ✓ Identify your gifts, talents and dreams.
  - ✓ Identify barriers and think of solutions.
  - ✓ Create a plan.
7. Look for funding and scholarships to support your activities. The Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) may be able to fund camps, classes and conferences for you to attend. Discuss possible options with your DSCC care coordination team.
8. Turn this page over for suggestions on how to find leisure and community participation activities.



# It's Great Being Involved!

Ways to find opportunities for leisure and community participation:

- **Special Recreation Association Network of Illinois:** Call your nearest cooperative to find out more about special recreation services in your community - [specialrecreation.org/find-my-services.html](http://specialrecreation.org/find-my-services.html)
- **Camps:** DSCC's annual list of summer camps that provide a variety of options for all ages, including day and overnight programs (updated every spring) - [dscc.uic.edu/events/categories/camp/](http://dscc.uic.edu/events/categories/camp/)
- **YMCA:** After-school programs, specialty camps for campers with special needs, opportunities to explore new interests and passions, swimming lessons, sports and play opportunities and more - [www.ymca.org/find-your-y](http://www.ymca.org/find-your-y)
- **Special Olympics Illinois:** Allowing people with intellectual disabilities to realize their full potential in sports and in life. Programs enhance physical fitness, motor skills, self-confidence, social skills and encourage family and community support - [www.soill.org/](http://www.soill.org/)
- **DO-IT:** Students with disabilities can connect with mentors to learn about opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) - [www.washington.edu/doit](http://www.washington.edu/doit)
- **Lions of Illinois Foundation:** Serving people with vision and hearing needs - [lionsofillinoisfoundation.org/](http://lionsofillinoisfoundation.org/)
- **Neighborhood Parents Network:** Connecting Chicago parents, parent workshops and support groups - [www.npnparents.org/](http://www.npnparents.org/)
- **Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs):** Peer support (social activities and meetings for a wide variety of disability categories) - [www.incil.org/](http://www.incil.org/)
- **Boys and Girls Clubs of America:** Programs designed to empower youth to excel in school, become good citizens and lead a healthy, productive life - [www.bgca.org/get-involved/ find-a-club](http://www.bgca.org/get-involved/find-a-club)
- **4-H:** A youth development program - [4-h.org/find/](http://4-h.org/find/)
- **Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters:** Provides support to siblings of people with disabilities by connecting them with information, networking opportunities and resources in order to enhance the quality of life for their entire family - [www.sibsnetwork.org/](http://www.sibsnetwork.org/)
- **Illinois Department of Natural Resources:** Kids' events, gardening tips, activity books, education materials, earth day in the parks and more - [dnr.illinois.gov/](http://dnr.illinois.gov/)
- **Best Buddies Illinois:** Offers one-to-one friendship, socialization opportunities, integrated employment and leadership development programs for individuals with and without disabilities - [www.bestbuddies.org/illinois/](http://www.bestbuddies.org/illinois/)
- **Wishing Organizations:** Make-A-Wish - [illinois.wish.org/](http://illinois.wish.org/); A Special Wish Chicago - [www.aswchicago.org/](http://www.aswchicago.org/); Dream Factory Central Illinois - [www.dreamfactoryinc.org/centralillinois/](http://www.dreamfactoryinc.org/centralillinois/), all grant dreams or wishes to critically and chronically ill children and youth ages 3-18.
- **School Activities:** After-school activities can offer some of the best learning experiences. Discover what your school offers and get involved with activities. You can develop new skills, increase self-esteem, improve social skills, have a change of pace and diversity, plus, it will look good on your resume or college application.
- **Faith-Based Youth Programs:** Can empower, protect and support well-being. Take a look at what is offered in your community.
- **Girl Scouts:** Fun activities, friendships, life skills, community experiences and more - [www.girlscouts.org/en/our-program/our-program.html](http://www.girlscouts.org/en/our-program/our-program.html)
- **Boy Scouts:** Scouting fun, hands-on-learning and achievement - [www.scouting.org/](http://www.scouting.org/)
- **Local Library:** Check with your library about inclusive programs for children with disabilities - [publiclibraries.com/state/illinois/](http://publiclibraries.com/state/illinois/)

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# Travel Safety

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Staying Safe While You Travel



1. **The best protection you have in a vehicle is your seat belt.** Don't go anywhere without buckling up.
2. **If you travel in a wheelchair, remember to fasten all tie-downs.** They'll help keep your wheelchair in place.
3. **While driving, always keep eyes on the road and off the phone. No texting while driving.** It is UNSAFE and could cause an accident!
4. When you are old enough for "Behind the Wheel" training, ask for help to see if adaptive devices/an adaptive vehicle are appropriate for you. Those who can help include your school Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, school counselor, occupational therapist or Division of Specialized Care for Children care coordination team.
5. There are specialized "Behind the Wheel Evaluation Services" available to help you decide what you need.
6. Funding is available for vehicle adaptations. Possible resources include:
  - **The Shirley Ryan Abilitylab's LIFE Center** has information on drivers rehab programs at [www.sralab.org/lifecenter/resources/listing-drivers-rehabilitation-programs-chicago-area-and-beyond](http://www.sralab.org/lifecenter/resources/listing-drivers-rehabilitation-programs-chicago-area-and-beyond)
  - **The Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)** may help with the cost and installation of vehicle modifications for those in a vocational program. If you need a vehicle to access vocational rehabilitation services or to accomplish your employment goals, DRS may also fund a driver's evaluation and training under these same conditions. Visit [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12) to find an office in your area or call **(800) 843-6154**.
  - **The Illinois Assistive Technology Program** Promotes available assistive technology services. Call **(800) 852-5110** or visit [iltech.org/](http://iltech.org/).
  - **The MDA Engage: Adaptive Driving** webinar is available for on-demand viewing. It focuses on understanding adaptive driving options and the processes involved. The webinar discusses vehicle modifications along with how to find resources and support for financing an adaptive vehicle: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZ3DE8RgAzc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZ3DE8RgAzc).

7. **Check your gas before you leave on a trip.** Running out of gas is no fun. It can leave you stranded in an unsafe place.
8. **Do not drink or use drugs and drive. Do not get into a car when the driver has been drinking alcohol or is under the influence of drugs.**
9. **Always drive with a licensed driver.** If the driver has a permit, then someone else in the car must have a license.

## What You Need to Know to Get Around On Your Own in the Community

- Recognize types of transportation.
- Understand that it is unsafe to accept rides with strangers.
- Use public transportation with assistance.
- Use public transportation independently.
- Learn how to call for a ride if using special transportation.
- Learn public bus schedules.
- Learn to safely enter and exit transportation.
- Know when and where to get on and off public transportation.
- Learn to ask for the cost of fare if you do not know.
- Identify the correct amount of money for the fare.
- Pay fare for the ride.
- Learn to use the wheelchair lift.
- Learn to ask for help with safety belts/harnesses.

To learn more about transportation training classes, call the **Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living** toll-free at (800) 587-1227 or visit [www.incil.org/about-us/](http://www.incil.org/about-us/).

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# Importance of Friendships

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Making Friends



- **Having friends is a way to help you learn to respect yourself and others.**
- **Having friends gives you someone to share your ideas, feelings and experiences with.**
- **It is important to know that friendships don't always mean that everyone is getting along.** Sometimes friends are happy and agree on almost everything. Other times, they disagree and might be upset with each other.
- **Your thoughts and feelings about yourself and others will change as you get to know one another.** You will learn more about yourself by exploring what you like and don't like in others.
- **It is nice to have friends from many different backgrounds and groups.** This helps you learn about different people and develop relationships with people of different abilities.
- **It may be tough at times to develop your identity.** Being noticed and respected by others are important to us. It's also very important to be true to yourself and your own values.
- **Joining clubs, groups and teams at school** is a good way to make friends who share your interests and likes.
- **Participating in inclusive community and school programs can help you learn a variety of skills.**
- **Keeping friends is often not easy.** Remember that friends need space and time by themselves.
- **The best ways to make new friends and keep your old ones are to be a good listener, get along well with others and be a friendly person.**
- **Special recreation programs and health condition-specific summer camps** are places where youth with special needs can meet and make new friends.
- Before going on a date, you should talk about tips for safe dating with parents, friends, counselors and other experts.

## More helpful resources on friendships include:

- **Tips on building friendships:** [tascc.ca/supporting-youth-with-disabilities/building-friendships/](https://tascc.ca/supporting-youth-with-disabilities/building-friendships/)
- **Friendships after high school:** [www.navigatelifetexas.org/en/transition-to-adulthood/friendships-after-high-school](https://www.navigatelifetexas.org/en/transition-to-adulthood/friendships-after-high-school)
- **The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities** has many resources, including webinars, a video library collection and FAQs on intellectual disability at [www.aaidd.org/intellectual-disability/faqs-on-intellectual-disability](https://www.aaidd.org/intellectual-disability/faqs-on-intellectual-disability).

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# Are You Ready?

## Transition Skills, Tips & Tools Relationships & Sexuality Development



**Now that you are getting older, your personal relationships might begin to get more complicated.**

**Teens with disabilities have the same feelings, needs and desires as people without disabilities**

If you are a teen with a disability, you may experience a delay in or lack of information about sexual development and healthy body image. You may also experience mistrust of your own body, over protection from your family or limited peer interaction.

You may want to discuss your feelings and desires with your parent, doctor, teacher or friend before acting on them. These talks can help you fill information gaps and make healthy decisions about dating and sexual contact.

### Things to Consider:

- **Treat a date like any other social situation.**
- **If you have a disability, talk about it as it naturally occurs in conversation.** If you aren't comfortable discussing your disability, think about what you want to say ahead of time.
- **Plan your response to questions.** It's important for you to know what you are comfortable with before you find yourself in a tricky situation. It's hard to make a decision when you are caught up in the moment.

**Sexual consent is very important in a relationship.** Sexual consent means two people both agree to take part in sexual activities, including kissing, touching or sex. Before being sexual with someone, you need to know if they want to be sexual with you, too. It's also important to be honest with your partner about what you want and don't want.

- Consenting and asking for consent are all about setting your personal boundaries and respecting those of your partner. It is important to check in if things aren't clear.
- Both people must agree to sex – every single time – for it to be consensual.
- Note that alcohol can make it harder to stop or say no when you do not want to do something.

**Having sex changes your relationship and affects your life in many ways.** Take the time to make the choice that is right for you.

**If you decide to have sex, make sure you take precautions and know the risks involved:**

- The only 100 percent effective way to avoid pregnancy and contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), such as herpes and AIDS, is to not have sex.
- Condoms are the only way to help prevent the transmission of STDs. Most condoms are made of latex. If you are allergic to using latex, you must take other precautions. Talk with your healthcare provider about other safe sex options.
- Use effective birth control to avoid unintended pregnancy. Talk with your healthcare provider to find the best method for you.

**More Resources:**

**Love, Dating, Relationships and Disability** at [www.easterseals.com/support-and-education/living-with-disability/love-dating-relationships-disability.html](http://www.easterseals.com/support-and-education/living-with-disability/love-dating-relationships-disability.html)

**Healthy Relationships, Sexuality and Disabilities Resource guide** at [www.mass.gov/doc/healthy-relationships-sexuality-and-disability-resource-guide-0/download](http://www.mass.gov/doc/healthy-relationships-sexuality-and-disability-resource-guide-0/download)

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# WORK

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Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

# Skills Checklist - Work

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

These activities will help youth gain the skills and abilities needed to reach their highest level of independence and ability. Some of these activities may not apply to everyone.

I plan to: ☐ get a job

☐ go to tech school or job training

☐ go to college

## EMPLOYMENT - Skills and Abilities

	Yes	No	N/A	Need More Info
Do you know how to use time properly, keep your workspace neat, respect other people's property and care for tools and supplies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When you are asked to do two or more things, can you do this on your own? (For example, "Get the envelope and put it in the mailbox.")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have chores or tasks that you must do at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do your chores or tasks match your abilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use a computer to browse the web, type papers or letters, send email or other tasks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you speak up to make your needs known (at school, work, community or home)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you do volunteer work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you talk about what job or career you would like to do when you are older?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know what clothes to wear based on where you are going (work, play, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to stay safe when away from home (such as finding the right streets, getting on or off the bus at the right place, using a phone)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you tell your friends and grown-ups (teacher, boss, principal) what you think?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know your strengths and interests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know people or agencies that can help you find a job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you written a job resume?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you fill out a job application?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you apply for a job or work or vocational services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know how to get along with others at school and work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a plan for work or job training or college?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you visited job sites or done job shadowing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know what accommodations you can get at work to help you do your job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a part-time or a full-time job for pay?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know your workplace rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Tips for Using the Skills List

Think about the skills you want to work on. Make notes of your needs and concerns. You can then talk about the next steps with the people who are helping you prepare for your future.

**Notes to Myself:** For each “Need More Info” item you checked, list questions you have or what you would like to know more about.

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**Next Steps – Goals:** List what you need to work on to help you learn how to take care of yourself in the future. You can ask the people who are helping you plan for your future to work on this with you.

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I want more information about: ☐ Vocational rehab ☐ Job resources

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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# What Are YOU Going to Be?

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Vocational Training



**It is never too early to think of what kind of job you want to do after you finish school.** You can then start to explore your interest in this area of work.

Programs to help you with work skills and finding a job include:

- **Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)** toll-free at **(800) 843-6154** or (800) 447-6404 (TTY). DRS can help guide you in many ways as you prepare for work or college through:
  - Career planning and counseling
  - Job training (job coaches)
  - Funding for college when it leads to employment
  - On-site support, including transportation
  - Funding for a personal assistant
- **STEP is a program that your school district might have that can be helpful for youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).** This program can help you learn job skills and get job training in your hometown.
- **Fast Track can help with career inventory, introduction to resumes, writing cover letters, and interviewing skills.**

## Vocational Training Resources

- Vocational and career training programs may be available through your high school. Ask your IEP team or school counselor.
- Real Work Matters, [www.rwm.org/](http://www.rwm.org/), can help you find vocational schools, trade schools and technical schools in Illinois and other states.
- Illinois WorkNet Centers, [www.illinoisworknet.com](http://www.illinoisworknet.com), may be able to help you with:
  - Writing resumes, learning to interview, job search and disability resources
- Ask your school counselor, healthcare provider, DRS high school liaison, your Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) care coordination team, friends and others for help finding and accessing vocational opportunities in your community.

**On the other side of the page is a list of important steps to think about before leaving high school.**

# Before Leaving High School

## Important Steps in Planning for the Transition to Work

- **Find out what your learning style is and what helps you learn best.** Do you learn best by seeing, hearing or doing it hands-on?
- Know your strengths and weaknesses. You can use these helpful worksheets at [www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/foundational-tools/person-centered/](http://www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/foundational-tools/person-centered/).
- **Explore your career interests and skills.** You can visit the Illinois Career Information System at [ilcis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html](http://ilcis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html).
- **Take classes to learn more about your areas of interest and that match your career interests.** This could include vocational classes and training.
- Attend your transition IEP meetings and be ready to answer these questions:
  - Would you like to go to college or tech school?
  - What would you like to study?
  - If you don't want to go to college, what do you plan to do after high school?
  - Where do you want to work? Do you have the skills needed to work there?
  - Where will you live after high school?
  - What do you like to do for fun when you are not in school?
- Be able to explain your disability or health condition and know what supports you may need to live and work in a place of your choice. You may find helpful information at the Job Accommodation Network at [askjan.org/](http://askjan.org/) or (800) 526-7234.
- Check out assistive technology tools that could help you do things at work or in the community.
  - Ininitec is the assistive technology program of UCP Seguin of Greater Chicago, [https://ucpsequin.org/what-we-do/technology\\_services/ininitec\\_coalition.html](https://ucpsequin.org/what-we-do/technology_services/ininitec_coalition.html).
  - Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) provides free information and assistance on assistive technology and other related disability topics, [iltech.org/](http://iltech.org/).
- Develop interview skills. Check out PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment's video on 10 Job Interview Tips For (and By) Young People with Disabilities at [www.pacer.org/transition/video/player.asp?video=267](http://www.pacer.org/transition/video/player.asp?video=267).

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# Employment Activities: Learning Job Skills

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
Job Skills



## What are your current skills?

To help you learn more about what skills you currently have and which ones you might need to build to be ready to go to work, check the Skills Matcher at [www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/Skills/skills-matcher.aspx](http://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/Skills/skills-matcher.aspx).

Here are skills that will help you do well in the workplace.

- ☐ Show the meaning of “yes” or “no.”
- ☐ Listen to instructions.
- ☐ Get and put items away when asked.
- ☐ Sweep, mop, vacuum or dust.
- ☐ Fold paper.
- ☐ Look for an opportunity to job shadow (watch somebody do their job to learn more about that type of work).
- ☐ Arrive at work on time.
- ☐ Repeat tasks after modeling.
- ☐ Follow instructions needing an action and an object.
- ☐ Use basic tools in the workplace.
- ☐ Use the telephone.
- ☐ Make copies.
- ☐ Print, write or dictate messages.
- ☐ Deliver a simple message.
- ☐ Use assistive technology in the workplace.
- ☐ Allow a personal attendant to help in the workplace.
- ☐ Tell supervisor if you will be late.
- ☐ Tell supervisor when absent due to illness or appointment.
- ☐ Obey time limits for breaks and lunch.

**Some skills you may need for interacting well with your boss and co-workers are on the back of this page.**

# Skills for Getting Along with Co-Workers

- Know how to greet others, such as shaking hands and saying hello.
- Use good eye contact when talking to or listening to others.
- Know how to introduce yourself, such as stating your first and last name.
- Respect personal body space of others.
- Use an assistive device to talk to others.
- Smile and talk to others during breaks.
- Say what you need to be able to do your job.
- Ask and answer questions.
- Get along with others.
- Show likes/dislikes in the workplace.
- Keep your emotions under control.

## Resources to Help:

**PACER's Preparing Youth for Employment Success page - [www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/planning/preparing-employment.asp](http://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/planning/preparing-employment.asp)**

**Transition Tips: Preparing for the Workforce - [centerontransition.org/publications/download.cfm?id=102](http://centerontransition.org/publications/download.cfm?id=102)**

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# Gaining Work Experience

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
*Is It Time to Get a Job?*



**There are many ways to get work experience and find a job you love.**

- **Work is a great way to learn basic skills**, such as:
  - Getting along with others
  - Understanding the value of money
  - Managing time
  - Handling new responsibilities
  - Developing self-confidence
- **Working can give you:**
  - A sense of accomplishment
  - Self-worth
  - Independence
  - A way to share your strengths and gifts
  - New friendships
- **You may already have job experience.** Do you:
  - Babysit younger kids?
  - Help your family around the house?
  - Do yard work for your neighbors?
  - Care for a pet?
  - Volunteer to help your teachers?
- **Volunteer work is a good way to get experience** when you are not sure what you want to do or how much time you will have to do it.
- Having a job when you are young will help you find and keep a job when you are older.

- If you would rather not work during the school year, consider working only during the summer.
- Wouldn't it be nice to **have work benefits and make more money** than what comes from Social Security every month? With Supplemental Security Income (SSI) work incentives, you can go to work and not lose your medical/Medicaid card or your SSI.
- **Ways to gain work experience:**
  - Volunteer for community work or school projects.
  - Work around the house or for neighbors or friends.
  - Spend time watching (job shadowing) someone already doing the type of job you want to do.
  - Work a part-time job for experience and start a good work record.
  - Work a job within the community during the school year as part of the school-work program.

### Here are resources to help you build work experience and prepare for job success:

PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment Learning Center - [www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/employment/](http://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/employment/)

PACER's "Building a Resume: Tips for Youth with Disabilities" handout - [www.pacer.org/transition/resource-library/publications/NPC-23.pdf](http://www.pacer.org/transition/resource-library/publications/NPC-23.pdf)

Illinois Worknet Center - [www.illinoisworknet.com/](http://www.illinoisworknet.com/)

Department of Human Services Disability and Rehabilitation Services - [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29727](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29727)

Illinois Center for Transition and Work - [ictw.illinois.edu/](http://ictw.illinois.edu/)

Illinois Career Information Center - [ilcis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html](http://ilcis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html)

Job Accommodation Network - [askjan.org/](http://askjan.org/) - (800) 526-7234

Illinois Employment & Training Center - [ides.illinois.gov/](http://ides.illinois.gov/) - (877) 342-7533

Seven Fast Facts on Work-Based Learning Experiences - [ictw.illinois.edu/docs/librariesprovider25/fact-sheets/woia/wbles.pdf?sfvrsn=c28fa619\\_14](http://ictw.illinois.edu/docs/librariesprovider25/fact-sheets/woia/wbles.pdf?sfvrsn=c28fa619_14)

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# Find Your Strengths and Talents

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools  
*We All Have Strengths and Talents*



- **We all have something that we are good at.** Sometimes it is so obvious that we don't realize it.
- **Find your personal strengths and abilities. These are things you are good at or others admire about you.**
- Think about your strengths and what you are good at. They might include:
  - Making people feel happy
  - Writing letters, poems, stories
  - Finding constellations
  - Throwing darts
  - Reading stories to children
  - Talking on the telephone
  - Using computers
  - Forecasting the weather
  - Having a good sense of direction
- Identify two or three strengths related to your disability:
  - Determination - to keep working on your goals and giving your best effort.
  - Problem-solving - to get around daily challenges and think creatively to find solutions.
  - Communication - to express to others what you need when you can't do it yourself.
  - Interpersonal skills - to build relationships with others, such as when you need them to help you.
- Ask your friends and family to help you learn **what you are good at.**
- **Learn new talents.** Get together with your friends and **share your talents.**

- Try new things to learn more about all your abilities and interests. For example, cook something new, learn about a famous person, plant a garden, learn to play a musical instrument, paint a picture, write a poem, join a club, or learn to sew.
- Showing your talents and knowing they are valued by people important to you can help you define your identity around what you do best.
- **Talents, strengths and areas of interest can be stepping stones to a career or job.**

## Vocational Training Resources

- **Charting the LifeCourse:** These tools may help you plan for your best life - [www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/foundational-tools/person-centered/](http://www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/foundational-tools/person-centered/). You can use the Integrated Support Star to help identify your and your family's strengths or solve a specific need.
- **Strengths and Interests Assessments:**
  - **Assessment: Find Your Strengths! — Multiple Intelligences for Adults Literacy and Education:** [www.literacynet.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html](http://www.literacynet.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html)
  - **Worksheet for Identifying Interests, Values, and Strengths — Cornell University, Career Services:** [archive.ilr.cornell.edu/download/7341](http://archive.ilr.cornell.edu/download/7341) or [archive.ilr.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/understanding-yourself-worksheet.pdf](http://archive.ilr.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/understanding-yourself-worksheet.pdf)

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