



TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD OVERVIEW

**A Caregivers
Guide to
Navigating Your
Child's Path to
Adulthood: The
Basics**



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OVERVIEW OF THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD TOOLKIT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

The transition from high school to adulthood is an exciting yet complex time for individuals with disabilities and their families. In North Carolina, state and federal laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), provide critical support for this transition. As a parent, understanding the available resources and planning ahead can help ensure your child's success in employment, education, and independent living.

Understanding Transition Services Under IDEA:

IDEA mandates that transition planning begins no later than age 14 in North Carolina. This process is included in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and should address postsecondary education, employment, and independent living skills. Schools must provide:

- Individualized Transition Plans (ITP): Outlines a student's goals and the services needed to achieve them.
- Vocational Training & Career Exploration: Opportunities to explore job training, internships, and community employment.
- Self-Advocacy and Life Skills Training: Encouraging independence in daily living activities and decision-making.

Employment and Vocational Resources



NC Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities (EIPD)

Offers job coaching, resume assistance, and workplace accommodations formerly called Voc Rehab.

NCWorks:

Provides career counseling and employment services for youth and people with disabilities. As well as providing career exploration and job matching.

Apprenticeship NC:

Supports individuals interested in skilled trades and hands-on training.



Postsecondary Education and Training

College and University Disability Services:

Most NC colleges offer accommodations through their disability services offices. Check with the college to see what services they offer.

Community Colleges & Career Programs

Many schools provide specialized training programs for individuals with disabilities.

NC Assistive Technology Program (NCATP):

Offers tools to support accessibility in education.

Healthcare and Benefits



Medicaid and Medicare:

Provides essential healthcare coverage for individuals with disabilities. There are income guidelines when the child is under 18.

Social Security Benefits:

Includes Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) for financial assistance.

NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS):

Offers a variety of disability-related healthcare resources and services.

Transportation and Mobility



Paratransit Services:

Available in many NC communities for individuals unable to use standard public transit. [Mountain Mobility](#)- Buncombe, [MCTA](#)- Madison

Adaptive Driving Programs:

Offers specialized training for individuals with disabilities to obtain a driver's license. Youth and teens with disabilities Driving Rehabilitation services

NC Public Transit Programs:

Provides accessible bus services for individuals with mobility challenges.

Independent and Community Living Support



Centers for Independent Living (CILs):

A national network of community-based organizations that help people with disabilities live independently.

NC Innovations Waiver:

A North Carolina waiver Medicaid program that helps people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) live in their community instead of an institution

1915i Services:

NC Medicaid program that provides free services to people in their homes and communities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), serious mental illness, traumatic brain injuries, or severe substance use



Social and Community Engagement

Special Olympics North Carolina and Parks and Recreation Programming:

Provides sports and recreational activities for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Local Disability Support Groups:

Offers social and networking opportunities for individuals and families. Some include [FIRSTwnc](#), [DisAbility Partners](#), and [The ARC of NC](#).

Volunteering and Advocacy:

Encourages individuals to participate in community service and disability rights initiatives.

Protecting the Future



Guardianship & Supported Decision-Making:

Exploring options that allow individuals to make choices with the right support.

Disability Rights North Carolina:

Disability Rights North Carolina is a legal advocacy agency that fights for the rights of people with disabilities in North Carolinas and a member of the National Disability Rights Network.

Special Needs Trusts & Financial Planning:

Ensuring financial security through tools such as ABLE accounts.

FIRSTwnc Community Factsheet

Guardianship, Alternatives and Registering for Selective Service.



TRANSITION TIMELINE FOR FAMILIES



Start Early Ages 3-10

Enroll in the NC Innovations Waiver Waitlist (Registry of Unmet Needs)

Contact Vaya Health: Vaya is the Managed Care Organization (MCO) serving Western NC, Vaya Health manages the Innovations Waiver waitlist.

Phone: -800-962-9003 (TTY 711), available Monday – Saturday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Innovations Waiver

Explore Medicaid and Related Programs

NC Medicaid: apply to access essential medical and therapeutic services.

CAP/C Waiver: for children with complex medical needs, consider the Community Alternatives Program for Children.

Middle School Ages 11-14

Begin Transition Planning

IEP Transition Goals: by age 14, ensure the IEP includes goals focusing on post-secondary education, employment, and independent living skills.

Community Programs: engage with local organizations offering social skills groups, recreational activities, and pre-vocational training.

High School Ages 14-18

Ages 14-16: Pre-Employment and Skill Development

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS): through NC Employment and Independence for people with disabilities, students can access services to prepare for employment.

NCDHHS youth and student services

Ages 16-18: Legal and Financial Considerations

Guardianship: explore guardianship options or alternatives like supported decision-making.

ABLE Accounts: establish an NC ABLE account to save funds without affecting SSI or Medicaid eligibility.

NC ABLE Program

Explore Post-Secondary Opportunities

Education and Employment: research local community colleges, vocational programs, and supported employment options.-

Independent Living: investigate housing supports and independent living programs in the region.

Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) at 18

SSI Benefits: upon turning 18, your child's eligibility is based on their income, not the family's. Approval often includes Medicaid coverage.



Ages 18-21 and Beyond



Confirm Adult Medicaid Eligibility

Medicaid Services: ensure continuous coverage by reapplying based on adult eligibility criteria.

Monitor Innovations Waiver Waitlist Status

Stay Informed: regularly contact Vaya Health to check on your child's position on the waitlist and inquire about available supports during the waiting period.

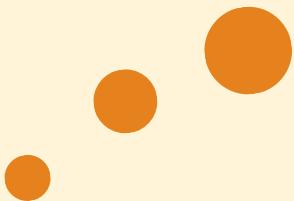
Check on eligibility for 1915i services now that your child is an adult.

Implement Adult Services and Supports

Vocational Rehabilitation: Employment and Independence for people with disabilities. Collaborate with EIPD for job placement and training.
EIPD

Community Resources: utilize local agencies and nonprofits dedicated to supporting adults with disabilities in Western NC.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



FIRSTwnc:

FIRSTwnc offers a range of services for children with disabilities of all ages, including early intervention programs for children from birth to age three, providing navigation services for developmental disabilities, mental health challenges and intellectual disabilities. FIRST provides outpatient therapy with clinicians specializing in trauma-informed care, trauma play, child-centered play therapy. They also offer youth transition to adulthood, autism, and caregiver coaching. The Community Parent Resource Center offers free training for parents on educational issues and parental rights. The Navigator plus program provides tailored one on one assistance .

The Path to Adulthood: Secondary Transition in North Carolina

This guide, provided by the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC), offers comprehensive information on transition planning, including developing self-advocacy skills, gaining independent living skills, and exploring career opportunities.

Transitioning from School to Adulthood in North Carolina: A Parent Guide

Developed by Disability Rights North Carolina, this guide provides direction, advice, and resources to help families navigate the transition process, covering topics such as building a transition IEP and exploring pre-employment services.

Transitioning Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs from Pediatric to Adult Health Care

Offered by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, this resource emphasizes the importance of coordinated and comprehensive care during the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare systems.

Work Together NC This statewide initiative focuses on the transition to adulthood for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It brings together self-advocates, families, employers, state agencies, and service providers to improve access to opportunities and resources.

Family Support Network of North Carolina

The Family Support Network provides information, support, training, and resources to assist families caring for children with special needs from birth to age 26, including resources specifically focused on the transition to adulthood

Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC): provides resources and support for families navigating special education and transition services.

Vaya Health: Vaya Health manages services for people with behavioral health (mental health and substance use), I/DD, and TBI in 32 counties across North Carolina including the west.

These resources are designed to support families in North Carolina as they navigate the complexities of transitioning their children with disabilities into adulthood. If you need further assistance or specific information, feel free to fill out a referral. Parents can self-refer here <https://firstwnc.org/referrals>

URLs for Websites in the Toolkit

Employment and Vocational:

North Carolina Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities:

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/eipd>

NC Works: <https://www.ncworks.gov/vosnet/default.aspx>

Apprenticeship NC: <https://www.apprenticeshipnc.com/>

Postsecondary Education:

NC Colleges and Universities: <https://www.northcarolina.edu/students/>

NC Community Colleges: <https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/students/student-services/student-support/disability-services/>

North Carolina Assistive Technology Program:

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/eipd/north-carolina-assistive-technology-program>

Healthcare and Benefits:

NC Medicaid: <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/>

Social Security Benefits: <https://www.ssa.gov/onlineservices/>

NC Department of Health and Human Services: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/>

URLs for Websites in the Toolkit

Transportation and Mobility:

Mountain Mobility:

<https://www.buncombecounty.org/governing/depts/transportation/default.aspx>

Madison County Transportation Authority:

<https://www.madisoncountync.gov/transportation-authority.html>

Driver Rehabilitation Services: <https://driver-rehab.com/>

ART Bus Service Asheville: <https://www.ashevillenc.gov/department/transit/>

Independent and Community Living Support:

North Carolina Centers for Independent Living: <https://nc-silc.org/centers/>

North Carolina Innovations Waiver:

<https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/providers/programs-and-services/behavioral-health-idd/nc-innovations-waiver>

1915i Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services:

<https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/1915i>

Social and Community Engagement:

NC Special Olympics: <https://sonc.net/>

Asheville Parks and Recreation: <https://www.ashevillenc.gov/department/parks-recreation/program-guide/>

FIRSTwnc: <https://firstwnc.org/>

DisAbility Partners: <https://www.disabilitypartners.org/>

The ARC of North Carolina: <https://www.arcnc.org/>

Legal Considerations and Advocacy:

Guardianship and Alternatives: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/adult-services/guardianship-and-alternatives-guardianship>

Disability Rights NC: <https://disabilityrightsnc.org/>

NC ABLE Program: <https://ncable.nc.gov/>

Use this QR Code
to access the links.



This grant-based program receives funding from
North Carolina HHS Mental Health Block Grant



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Mental Health,
Developmental Disabilities and
Substance Use Services