

## **TRANSITION GUIDE**

Transition is an ongoing life process. This Guide was created by the Social Work Department of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and the Special Needs Family Center under the guidance of Milwaukee County Transition Advisory Board (MCTAB) as a tool to assist in planning for each student's future.

Please refer to this Guide often and keep it with the following documents:

Current IEP – Individual Education Plan (plus last 4 years)

Most recent Psychological Evaluation

Medical Reports

Last Statement from SSI (Supplemental Security Income) or other Social Security Information

Katie Beckett Application

Plan for Employment (IPE) – Division of Vocational Rehabilitation/DVR

Family Support Records

Resume

Job History

Volunteer Work

References

Financial Information (Pension, Child Support, etc)

Most Recent Pay Stubs

A folder or binder is suggested for keeping this Transition Guide and important documents so that they are easily located when needed.

Transition often presents new challenges for a family with a teenager or young adult with a chronic illness/special needs. Understandably, families often develop strong bonds with various health care professionals or specialist over the years. Often this working relationship spans over 18 years. They come to depend on and trust these partners in their journey and parting ways can seem scary.

Moving on to adult health care providers (doctors, nurse practitioners, specialist, therapist ect.) can also be a positive experience and beneficial for the young adult. Adult practitioners have more experience with adult health issues and know how to treat with adult medicines. Youth can take an active role in decision making and problem-solving to whatever degree they are able. Independence contributes to a strong self-esteem.

It is recommended that families and providers work together toward a smooth transition by starting to discuss this topic early. Working together as a team will promote the best possible outcome during the transition process. There are specific skills that teens can begin to learn when they are young which can lead to greater independence as an adult.

As part of this process a doctor or nurse practitioner will begin to discuss this topic with you and your teen on an ongoing basis. The health care provider and the clinic social worker will spend some private time with the teen to address issues important to promote a healthy lifestyle for the teen. They will encourage the teen to become an active team member in this transition process and provide education on the disease process, specific treatment plan, and preventive health issues( such as diet, exercise, smoking, drugs, alcohol, and sexual behavior) as needed.

It is natural to feel apprehensive about this process; however, there are many resources that are willing to assist you during this phase of your teen's life. If you have questions about transitioning to adult care providers consider asking your doctor, nurse practitioner or specialty clinic social worker or contact the Special Needs Family Center at 414 266-6333. We hope this Packet will be a useful starting tool as you go through the transition process.

## Transition Terms

- **accommodations:** Accommodations may be services, modifications or equipment that are needed by a person with a disability to receive equal access to school, employment or community.
- **Advanced Directive:** An advanced directive is a legal form that allows an adult patient to explain their wishes about their healthcare, and may name a person to make medical decisions on their behalf, if the patient is not capable to make them.
- **assistive technology:** Assistive technology is equipment needed to do a job or to receive equal access to learning. Some examples might be a wheelchair, a computer, speaking device or a switch.
- **community agencies:** these agencies in the community provide services for adults (and sometimes children) with disabilities.
- **Day Services:** Day Services (also known as day programs) are ways to develop recreational and pre-employment interests and skills
- **Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR):** DVR is funded through a federal rehabilitation act. They provide assistance with job exploration and placement. DVR can be invited to attend IEP meetings when the young adult is 14, but they do not provide funding assistance until graduation.
- **disability or medical condition:** This will be named by a doctor or school. Young adults should know the name of their disability or medical condition and what kind of help they need to be successful.
- **eligibility requirements:** After completing high school, people with disabilities are no longer “entitled” to services. They must apply and meet the criteria to receive services.
- **evaluation/therapy report:** These reports, written by therapists or doctors, name and explain the disability or medical condition and what types of help might needed for a young adult to be successful.
- **financial assistance:** This is money to help pay for schooling, healthcare services, day services or recreation, that does not come out of personal income.
- **Guardianship:** Once a children turn 18, they are considered legal adults and must sign legal documents for themselves. This includes agreement to medical treatment, legal contracts such as rental agreements, charge cards and more. If a parent or other adult plans to be responsible (sign the forms) for these decisions for another adult, they will need to file a petition to become the guardian of the person.
- **healthcare providers:** Healthcare Providers are the people who assist people with staying healthy. Some healthcare providers are doctors, nurses, therapists, specialists and home health aides.
- **independent living skills:** These are the skills that people develop in order to be in charge of their own lives. Some examples of independent living skills include housekeeping, cooking, shopping, money management and time management.
- **insurance card:** This card has the information that medical providers need so they can receive payment for their service.
- **insurance carrier:** The name of a person’s health insurance company . It may be a private insurance company and it may be government-funded (as in Medicaid or Medicare).
- **job exploration:** Job exploration helps people learn about what types of jobs they might be interested in and what skills are needed to do those jobs. Some ways to learn about jobs are to

ask family and friends what kind of work they do, visit people at their workplace (with permission), take an “interest inventory”, or work with a job placement agency. Be sure to ask questions about jobs that you are interested in.

- **medical, academic and psychological reports:** All of these reports will document any needs above what a typical peer experiences. These reports are required to receive any accommodations when going to a post-secondary school.
- **mobility training:** People receive mobility training to learn how to get around in their community. They might learn how to take a bus, how to call for medical transport, or how to get safely from one place to another.
- **natural supports:** Natural supports are unpaid, interested people who assist with participation in community activities. Some natural supports might be friends, neighbors, parents or siblings, and co-workers.
- **personal care worker:** A personal care worker is a paid staff person who assists people with disabilities to take care of themselves, if they need help. They might help with tasks like getting out of bed, showering and getting dressed. They might also help with medical cares or some treatments.
- **personal safety issues:** Young adults should learn how to be safe at home and in the community. This includes protecting themselves and their belongings from being hurt or lost, knowing how to get help when needed and learning about safe relationships.
- **Point of Entry Manual:** The Point of Entry Manual (POEM) is a listing of organizations that provide services for youth transitioning to the adult world. Some of those services might be transportation, work, social or learning after high school. The POEM is available on the internet at [www.wsti.org](http://www.wsti.org)
- **post-secondary education:** Post-secondary education is any structured education that people attend after high school.
- **Release of Information:** This is a form that is signed to give legal permission to providers to access information about your health care or education.
- **SSI:** SSI stands for Supplemental Security Income, which is money to help some people with disabilities who have limited income.
- **self-advocacy skills:** These skills that help a person to speak up for him or her-self.
- **self-advocate:** This is a person who speaks up for him- or herself by saying what they need or explain their disability or medical condition.
- **side effects:** A side effect is a reaction that somebody may have to a medicine.
- **special needs trust fund:** A special needs trust fund is usually planned for people who are expected to need medical assistance to pay for their health care needs as an adult. A trust fund helps to pay for daily living expenses that aren't covered by an individual's income or SSI payments. Special needs trusts are usually set up by a parent or other loved one.
- **time management:** Time management includes keeping track of where someone needs to be and when they need to be there. That includes planning for the time it takes to get where they are going and the amount of time they will be there. For example, if someone is meeting a friend for lunch, they will need to know what time to be there and how long it will take to get there, as well as how much time they will be able to spend at lunch if they have to be somewhere else after that.