



Transition Planning: from school to adult life

What is transition planning and why is it important?

All students wonder, “What am I going to do with my life after school?” Schools use the transition planning process to help students with disabilities and their families plan for life after high school. There are many Medicaid-funded supports and services available for young adults with developmental disabilities after high school. Students and families must apply for these supports and apply for Medicaid, if eligible, as part of transition planning. School services are available to students with disabilities until the end of the school year in which they turn 21, or until they graduate with a Regents or local diploma. However, each student should have a transition plan in place by age 15 or earlier (8 NYCRR 200.4(d)(2)(ix)) to ensure that services will be available when they need them.

Who can help with transition planning?

People who will help you learn about your choices include your high school guidance counselor, teachers, other school staff, family, and friends. A strong circle of support can help with the transition planning process.

What is a circle of support?

A group of people that you have freely chosen who help you think about your interests and goals, put them into words and make them happen.

- With your interests and goals in mind, your circle of support helps you make choices and decisions that help you take charge of your life.
- You choose the members of your circle of support. Some people you may choose are:
 - Family members, friends, neighbors, and others in your community
 - School staff including your teachers, school counselor, transition specialist, and support staff such as speech, occupational or physical therapist, social worker, psychologist, mental health provider
 - Care managers
 - Other service providers, including staff from:
 - Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)
 - Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)
 - Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
 - Office of Mental Health (OMH)

The transition planning process can help you decide what you want to do after completing school. You may be interested in:

- Going to college or to a vocational or technical school
- Working in a community business
- Starting your own business
- Volunteering in your community
- Taking part in the creative arts, music, or dancing

How can OPWDD help?

Our mission is to help people with developmental disabilities lead richer lives. We will help you live as independently as possible and be a part of your community. We value the abilities and talents you have to contribute, and your right to make choices about your life. We offer supports and resources that help you to:

- Enjoy meaningful relationships
- Experience personal health and growth
- Live in the home of your choice
- Fully participate in your communities

For more information call OPWDD's Infoline at: 866-946-9733 or email: student.transition@opwdd.ny.gov

For people with a hearing impairment, use NY Relay System 711.

If you don't already receive OPWDD services, you will need to go through our Front Door process.

OPWDD's Front Door:

OPWDD Front Door staff will talk with you about OPWDD services and the Front Door process, and will refer you to a Care Coordination Organization (CCO) where you will work with a care manager. The care manager will help you and your circle of support assess your interests and needs and put together a Life Plan (plan for services). Your Life Plan will describe your strengths and abilities and define your goals and support needs. Our services include supports to help you:

- Develop job skills and get a job in the community,
- Develop and improve daily living skills,
- Be more active in your community, and
- Be more independent.

Help with Finding a Job

ACCES-VR can work with you to explore job options and help you develop job skills. Usually, students start to work with ACCES-VR two years before they leave school. For more information, go to www.acces.nysed.gov/vr , or call 1-800-222-JOBS (5627).

Tips for parents and students

- Start early; it's never too early to investigate the possibilities
- Ask questions; find out what options exist in your community and how to apply for them
- Learn about the eligibility process for getting services. Find out what documents you need to provide so that supports are ready when needed



**Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities**

Visit our website at www.opwdd.ny.gov or contact OPWDD's information line at **(866) 946-9733**.

People with hearing impairments use NY Relay System **7-1-1**