

A Bridge to the Future



Educated Transition Choices for the Ability Graduation Option

A Resource Guide for Families and Youth with Disabilities



Parents Reaching Out
Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family

Spring 2010

From One Parent to Another

As a parent of a son with disabilities, I go through times when I feel overwhelmed by the day-in, day-out responsibilities of his care. This is accompanied by feelings of inadequacy, frustration, fear, sadness and sometimes anger. If I could draw a picture of these feelings, it would look like a fierce thunderstorm, dark and threatening. Although these feelings are uncomfortable, even painful at times, and difficult to experience, they will vary in their intensity over time.

During the dark and discouraging times I am least able to plan, or even think about a positive future for my son. The transition planning process will be most effective when I am able to bring hope and optimism to the team meetings. Unfortunately, it is not possible to schedule these emotions to fit my calendar of appointments. Instead, they are subject to current events in the life of my son, my family, and myself.

Although I cannot guarantee to have a positive attitude at a transition planning meeting, I can take time beforehand to explore my feelings. I can talk to people I trust, which will help me get in touch with my feelings. Recognizing negative feelings is one thing; allowing them to go away naturally is another. Discovering and utilizing ways to dispel their gloomy impact is most helpful.

Rather than holding on to disappointments associated with past problems, I can choose to focus on previous successes. Calling on those who truly comprehend the difficulties I am facing will strengthen me to weather the emotional storm. When I remember the people who have worked with me to find solutions, my attitude will be more hopeful. If my family has not yet experienced success in the arena of current concern, it will help to consider the positive outcomes of someone else with similar disabilities. It also helps to discuss various scenarios with family members, friends, and those who are working with my son and are concerned about his welfare. Examining possibilities may clarify potential outcomes and identify my expectations which are closely linked to my feelings about the situation.

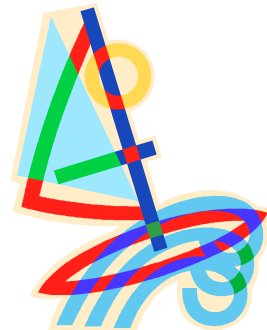
By doing my "emotional homework" in advance, I will be better equipped to acknowledge my own feelings, discern their impact on my perspective, and comprehend the influence my attitudes have on others as I advocate for my son. This makes it more likely that I will devote the time, energy, and commitment which his effective transition will require. These ingredients, combined with realistic optimism, will lead to successful transition planning and the blueprint for a brighter future for my son and myself.

Gail Kulp

Parent

New Oceans

We can not discover new oceans
Unless we have the courage
To lose sight of the shore. Anonymous



Introduction

What is in store for youth with disabilities after they leave school? What will happen to your young adult when he or she no longer receives the educational services or accommodations which have been mandated by federal law? These questions are important to all parents of youth with special needs. Even though disabilities may vary in their severity or impact, the need to plan for the future is great.

It is vital for families to realize that transition represents the process of moving from services of entitlement to services of eligibility. In New Mexico, students with disabilities are entitled to educational services up to the age of 22. After that, they must meet eligibility criteria to qualify for services that often have long waiting lists. As soon as your child is diagnosed, it is important to apply for the Developmental Disability (DD) Waiver (see page 42). This waiver can provide respite help for families, Medicaid, and other services. Families who begin planning early have more time to overcome any barriers that arise. They also have time to create other opportunities that will help them achieve their goals.

The transition plan will be unique for each individual and should be designed to address specific needs, strengths, preferences, and interests. Young adults' plans should reflect their personal values as well as those of their family, peers, and the community in which they live. Transition plans will be affected by the availability of programs and services. Knowing what programs and resources are available can be the key to successful outcomes.

This guide has been developed for families and youth with disabilities in New Mexico who have chosen, or who are considering, the Ability Graduation Option to the diploma. We invite you to use this booklet to design a bridge that will lead your young adult to new opportunities and success in the community. It is written to inform you about the issues and range of options to consider so that you can explore possibilities to make educated choices. Some sections may be more applicable and helpful than others. Our goal is to provide tools for youth with disabilities and their families to help them be:

- Active participants in developing transition goals and activities to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- Prepared for a successful transition to adulthood so they may reach their full potential;
- Ready to pursue and achieve lifelong goals.



We have also developed a companion book, *The Journey Continues*, for families of students who will follow the Standard or Career Readiness Options to the diploma. *The Journey Continues* includes more detailed information and resources for students who are considering college or vocational schools after high school. If you know of other families that are interested in planning for transition, we invite you to suggest that they contact Parents Reaching Out to request their own copy of the guide that best meets their needs. If you would like to discuss transition issues with a Family Liaison from our office or a trained volunteer from your community, please contact Parents Reaching Out.

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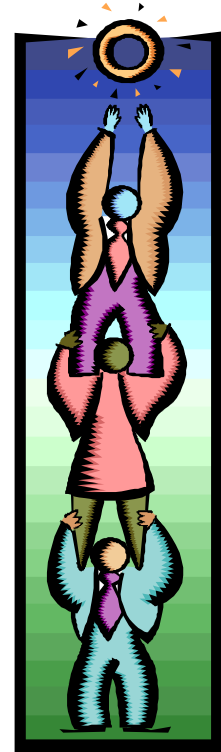
Parents Reaching Out is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs as the Parent Training and Information Center for New Mexico. The contents of this handbook were developed under the grant. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

What is Transition Planning?

The transition plan should drive the IEP! When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in 1990, it included the first federal mandate for transition services. It clearly intended that those services be an integral part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Transition planning is designed to assist students with disabilities as they move from school into the adult world. It is the compass that guides the IEP towards the bigger picture... “Where will the child be at age 25?”

IDEA 2004 specifies that transition planning must begin no later than age 16, with a statement in the IEP of the student’s transition service needs as they apply to his/her course of study. Transition services for a student are to begin by age 16, (or sooner, if it is appropriate for the individual’s needs). NM, however, requires a Next Step Plan for all students by the end of the eighth grade. This plan identifies transition goals and courses of study to reach those goals. If a student will reach the age of 14 during the IEP year, transition planning for secondary coursework must be included in the IEP for that year. Students with disabilities will have an IEP in place by the end the 8th grade that includes the components of the Next Step plan and meets the requirements of IDEA. No student will have both plans.

The New Mexico State Statutes require that the IEP, including transition areas, is **reviewed annually** to ensure that the **long-range goals focus on strengths and abilities rather than just educational processes**. Transition planning prior to age 14 may be especially important for students who expect to graduate with their peers, have unusually complex needs, or who are at risk of dropping out. Parents of a student receiving accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should be prepared to address transition issues when developing the 504 Plan. Our publication, *The Handbook – Parental Rights and Special Education Procedures*, offers more information on Section 504.



If people with disabilities are to become contributing members of society, they must have access to the necessary information, resources, and services to meet their identified needs. Transition planning sessions should target meaningful goals. A well-coordinated transition plan in the IEP is the dynamic result of efforts by student, parent, and other participants to communicate, cooperate, and commit resources focused on successful outcomes.

The transition plan will be the cornerstone for your child's adult life.

It is definitely a worthwhile effort for each participant.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the key to identifying a student’s needs and making plans to meet these needs. *For more information about the IEP process contact Parents Reaching Out (1-800-524-5176) to request your copy of The Handbook – Parental Rights and Special Education Procedures.*

Essential Transition Components of the IEP

The transition components of the IEP, according to IDEA, must be based on the student's needs and take into account his/her interests and preferences. Components must be designed to promote movement from school to work for the individual student. They identify a coordinated set of services or activities that include the student's goals for post-school activities, objectives, timelines, and assigned responsibilities. Transition planning incorporates input from students, families, teachers, special education administrators, and others likely to provide or pay for services.



IDEA 2004 specifies that a student's IEP:

- Includes a statement of transition service needs (by age 16). New Mexico requires this plan to be in place by age 14.
- States what services are needed and identifies interagency responsibilities (beginning at 16, or younger- if appropriate).
- Is based on the student's needs.
- Considers the student's interests and preferences.
- Focuses on strengths and abilities rather than educational processes.
- Promotes movement from school to work.
- Is reviewed (at least) annually.
- Contains appropriate measurable post secondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills, where appropriate;
- Outlines transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals, including courses of study; and
- Includes a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under this title, if any, that will transfer to him or her on reaching the age of majority. This statement must be included no later than one year before the student reaches the age of majority under State law.

PRO NOTE: All students (including students with disabilities) in New Mexico are required to have a **Next Step Plan** in place by the *end of 8th grade*. The Next Step plan identifies **transition needs** and **courses of study** to reach identified goals. Transition planning for students with disabilities takes place through the IEP process, including the components of the Next Step Plan.

The Next Step Plan is an annual, individualized, written plan that specifies post-high school goals and courses of study (coursework and educational experiences) that will help the student achieve those goals. It is developed by a student in consultation with the student's parent or guardian and the school counselor/school official. An Interim Next Step Plan should be in place in grades 8-11. The Final Next Step Plan is to be completed during the senior year prior to graduation.

(HB522 amending the requirements for High School Graduation and Student Curriculum Plans Section 22-13-1.1)

New Mexico's Graduation Options

The New Mexico Statutes (NMS) and the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) provide the legal framework for graduation requirements and options. These are regularly reviewed and updated in order to ensure that the students in our state exit high school well prepared for the workplace and post secondary education. Be sure to stay in close contact with your son's or daughter's school in order to make sure that he or she is completing the current requirements for graduation.



The IEP team plays a key role in the IEP graduation process. The team should consist of the student, parent, special educator, general educator, vocational educator, building administrator or designee, transition specialist, related service provider(s), evaluation/diagnostic specialist, adult service provider(s), and others per family request. The IEP team determines the most appropriate program of study based upon student needs and impact of the disability. Since the least restrictive environment (LRE) principle applies to all of the graduation options, the IEP team must ensure each student's access to the general education curriculum. The rationale for the particular program of study must be clearly documented in the IEP, with goals and objectives reviewed and updated annually. The IEP team has the responsibility of verifying that program goals and objectives leading to graduation and receipt of a high school diploma have been met. **The IEP team can not change a student's graduation option from the standard program after the 20th day of the senior year.**

Standards for Excellence

6.29.1.9 NMAC Procedural Requirements

The standard New Mexico diploma of excellence shall be awarded upon completion of any of the graduation options as outlined below (*Section 22-13-1.1 NMSA 2004*). The wording and visual appearance of the diploma shall be the same in all instances.

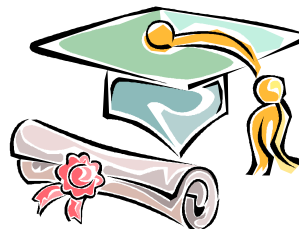
Standard Graduation Option – this program of study is based upon meeting or exceeding all requirements for graduation based on New Mexico Standards for Excellence, with or without reasonable accommodations of delivery and assessment methods. The student must pass all sections of the current state graduation examination under standard administration or with state-approved accommodations. In addition, students shall meet all other standard graduation requirements, such as the number of required units in each subject area.

Career Readiness Graduation Option – this program of study is based upon meeting the state Career Readiness Standards with Benchmarks as defined in the IEP with or without reasonable modifications of delivery and assessment methods. To earn a diploma through the career readiness option, a student must take the current state graduation examination and achieve a level of competency to be determined by the student's IEP team; earn the number of credits required for graduation through standard or alternative courses as determined by the IEP team; participate in the statewide college and workplace readiness assessment system; and achieve competency in all areas of the NMPED employability and career development standards, as determined by the IEP team and the student's interests.

Ability Alternative Graduation Option – this program of study is based upon meeting or surpassing IEP goals and objectives, with or without reasonable modifications of delivery and assessment. Typically, this graduation option is designed for students with severe cognitive and/or physical disabilities or students with severe mental health challenges. The IEP goals and functional curriculum coursework must be based on the State Standards with Benchmarks and

Performance Standard or the State Expanded Grade Band Expectations (EGBE). EGBEs are used to develop IEP goals and objectives for students with significant cognitive disabilities. To earn a diploma through the ability program of study, a student must earn the same number of credits as students on the other options, or the student must be provided equivalent educational opportunity. In addition, the student must participate in the statewide college and workplace readiness assessment system and take the current state graduation examination(s) or the State's Alternative Assessment. The IEP team determines the proficiency level for each student. The ability program must be individualized to meet each student's needs.

Note: *It is important to begin thinking early about which graduation option is appropriate for your student. It is important that solid plans be developed for attaining a diploma. The standard diploma is the ideal diploma for all students. The career readiness and ability alternative graduation options are appropriate for a relatively small number of students. The graduation option should be chosen at the beginning of a student's high school journey, not made in desperation at the end. From the very beginning of a child's school experience, the IEP must be developed with integrity, high expectations, and accountability for results.*



Certificate of Transition

Students who have successfully completed four or more years of high school, but need more time to work on transition goals and objectives may receive a *certificate (of transition)*. A certificate will not be issued without a follow-up plan of action. Students that are receiving a *certificate of transition* will participate equitably in all graduation ceremonies with their peers. The certificate does not end the student's right to a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE), and your young adult may continue to receive special education services in order to complete his or her educational program. Services may continue, if needed, until the end of the school year in which the student turns 22.

Students will receive a diploma upon completion of the follow-up plan.

New Mexico's Graduation Requirements Are Changing

In 2007 and 2008, the Legislature made several changes to the Public School Code. For example, 9th graders entering in the 2009-2010 school year will need 24 units to graduate. Additional units for math and science have also been added. For the most up-to-date graduation information, stay in touch with your child's school, or contact the New Mexico Public Education Department Humanities Bureau at 505-827-6573.

High School Competency Examination

According to state regulations, all high school sophomores (10th grade) are required to take the current graduation examination or the New Mexico Alternative Assessment. Students with disabilities that take the standard graduation examination may have appropriate accommodations in accordance with their Individualized Education Program.

- Students with disabilities may take the exam with standard administration or with pre-approved accommodations. Any accommodations that the student receives must be listed on their IEP. The accommodations the student receives during the testing situation should mirror those that he or she receives on a daily basis in the classroom.
- Students with significant cognitive disabilities may take the New Mexico Alternate Assessment in order to demonstrate attainment of expanded standards. The student's participation in the NMAA must be documented in his or her IEP. There must be substantial documentation to ensure that the student meets the criteria for taking the alternate assessment. IEP teams will use the "Participation Criteria/Eligibility Guidelines for the New Mexico Alternate Assessment" when determining a student's eligibility for the assessment.
- The bio-grids for both of the assessments contain bubbles for collecting all necessary information.

Please note that students receiving special education and related services who are on the *standard graduation option* for the diploma would need to pass all subtests of the current state graduation examination. They may use the accommodations that are listed in the IEP. According to the Revised Special Education Regulations (2002): *If a student on the standard program of study does not pass a subtest on the examination, the IEP team must meet to decide what supports and services the team will provide the student to prepare him/her to retake and pass the exam.*

Students receiving special education and related services on the *career readiness or ability graduation options* would need to participate in the current state graduation examination, using accommodations if necessary. *If a student in either of these programs of study does not pass a section of the exam, the student's IEP team shall meet and decide a realistic score for the student on the section.* The team must also determine what supports and services they will provide the student to prepare him/her to retake the exam and meet the criteria for success as set by the IEP team. Students on the *ability graduation option* who meet the "Participation Criteria /Eligibility Guidelines for the Alternative Assessment in New Mexico" would be expected to participate in the NMAA.

*For more information, contact:
The New Mexico Public Education Department
Assessment and Accountability Division
(505)827-6577*

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/AssessmentAccountability/AssessmentEvaluation/index.html>

Q. Does a student on either the Career Readiness or the Ability graduation option have to take the current state graduation examination(s)?

A. Yes. Students receiving special education and related services through the Career Readiness or Ability options would need to participate in the state graduation exam(s) using state-approved accommodations, if necessary. If a student on either of these programs does not pass a section of the exam, the student's IEP team shall meet and decide a realistic score for the student on the section. The team must also determine what supports and services they will provide the student to prepare him/her to retake the exam and meet the criteria for success as set by the IEP team. Students in the Ability program of study who meet the "Participation Criteria /Eligibility Guidelines for the Alternative Assessment in New Mexico" would be expected to participate in the NMAA. If a student achieves an advanced level on the NMAA, he or she would need to take the standard graduation exam, with appropriate accommodations.



Q. Will institutions of higher learning accept all graduation options to the diploma?

A. Yes. All New Mexico institutions accept the Diploma, regardless of the graduation option. However, out-of-state institutions of higher learning may not, so requirements should be checked in advance of graduation. Students also need to make sure they are taking the courses that are required for admission to the post secondary institution they plan to attend. Check with your school counselor for current requirements.

Q. How many times may a student re-test?

A. Students on the Career Readiness and Ability options will first take the test to establish a baseline level. Then, based on that information, the IEP team will determine the student's passing proficiency level. Student performance on subsequent tests is monitored to determine if the student's program is appropriate to reach proficiency level, and if the proficiency level is realistic for the student to attain.

Q. Do IEP teams set scores by subtest or composite score?

A. The IEP team sets a level of proficiency for each subtest. The target score will vary depending on the student's areas of strength, course of study, and needed accommodations. For example, if your child has difficulty with reading, but is strong in math, the math score will be set at a higher level than the targeted reading score.

Q. What happens if my son or daughter does not reach the proficiency level that has been set by the IEP team?

A. It is the responsibility of the IEP team to identify and document the strategies, interventions, accommodations, and supports that will be provided to help your child achieve the determined proficiency level. The team may need to revisit the level that was set and make adjustments based on your child's needs. The IEP team may lower the score if the team determines that the original scores were not appropriate for the student.

Q. How will I know when my student will be graduating?

- A. Parents must be notified of their child's graduation (as a change in placement) with enough time to appeal the action. If state regulations have been followed, graduation should not come as a surprise to parents, since transition services would have begun at least by the time the student turned 14. School districts should have been holding IEP meetings which addressed graduation requirements as a part of the transition plan.

Q. How long will my son or daughter be able to receive public educational services?

- A. Public education services stop when the student receives his/her diploma. Some agencies will not serve an eligible adult in day programs until they turn 22, even if he/she has graduated. A parent may not require the school district to withhold issuance of a diploma until age 22 if the student with disabilities has met the graduation requirements and transition goals on the IEP. It is important to make an informed decision when selecting a graduation option, and to make sure that it is recorded in the IEP.

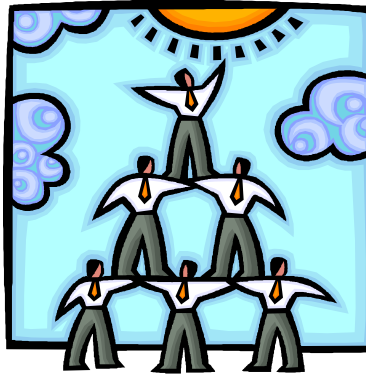
Q. What is an appropriate alternate assessment for secondary aged student?

- A. The New Mexico Alternate Assessment has been approved as an alternate to the current high school competency examination (given in grades 10 and above).

Q. Can a teacher-made alternate assessment be used to replace a state-mandated test?

- A. Teacher-made assessments *cannot* replace state and district standardized testing. However, teacher-made tests may be useful in determining present levels of performance and attainment of goals and objectives in the IEP.

High expectations go beyond the successful outcomes we want for students. *We must also have high expectations for ourselves and the other adults in a student's life.* As parents, we expect educators and service providers to follow the plan for transition. If this is our standard, as parents, we must be prepared to follow through on the commitments we have made as part of the plan. Successful transition takes place when everyone does their part—the student, parents, educators, and service providers. The pressure to succeed as a young adult in the community should not rest on the student alone. *Expect your child to do his/her best and likewise for all of the adults in his/her life.*



High Expectations

A Little History: In the 1970s, we (as parents) were happy just to get our kids with significant disabilities into school. In fact, we thought our children needed special schools and special classrooms with special teachers. We soon figured out that all the special stuff really did not help our children become productive citizens. Our children still dropped out of school at nearly twice the rate of their non-disabled peers. Our children stayed home after their school experience and were unemployed or underemployed. The truth is, not much has changed over the past 25 years.

When you look at the whole picture, youth with disabilities are still struggling and we don't see good outcomes for people with disabilities. Wouldn't it be nice if we could just point our finger at a single individual or system and blame him/her or it? It's not that easy! We are all responsible when children with disabilities fall short of success!

Over the years, there have been only a few key strategies that have been proven to help create positive outcomes for youth with disabilities. The keys to success are:

- A well thought out plan that is followed by all;
- Highly involved parents;
- Inclusive schools;
- Increased Vocational Education;
- Self-Determination Instruction;
- Life Skills Training



Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Special Education is a Service, Not a Place!

Special Education is a Service, Not a Place! Good things happen for everyone when youth with disabilities are educated with their non-disabled peers. Self-esteem is greatly improved and expectations are much higher for all students. High expectations improve the outcomes for youth with disabilities. Even though special education provides many safeguards, supports, services, modifications, and accommodations for our children, these alone are not enough. The place where children are educated is very important. In fact, where they are educated may have more to do with who they are as adults than anything else. We learn from each other! Research has shown that academics alone do not produce better outcomes for children. In fact, children with disabilities who are educated with their non-disabled peers in the general education classroom have a greater chance of becoming contributing community members. The federal IDEA 2004 regulations even refer to children being educated in natural environments.

Following the step by step IEP process should lead to an appropriate program for your child in the Least Restrictive Environment. ***Only after supports and services have been provided in the regular classroom without success should an alternate placement be considered.*** Placement refers to a continuum of supports and services to help the child succeed. This decision is made at the IEP meeting by the IEP team. The placement decision is made after the team has shared all available information about your child, including present levels of performance and educational needs. The team then uses this information to develop appropriate goals and objectives. Placement is one of the last decisions made by the IEP team at the IEP meeting. The goal of this decision is to provide your young adult with a learning setting that will meet his/her individual needs. A student can succeed in a regular classroom with appropriate services! IDEA 2004 mandates that a variety of placement choices be made available for children with disabilities.

Q. *What are some of the barriers to high expectations?*

A. We, as parents of children with disabilities, have been a barrier and have had low expectations in the past. At the very least, we have had "uninformed" expectations and have not pushed for plans that offered building blocks for success. (Sometimes that is what is known as 20-20 hindsight.) Schools as a whole are not skilled in developing and following through with good transition plans. In the past, this was partially due to the lack of solid research based information to lead them to best practice. Now that there is good research around the country on the outcomes of high expectations, planning decisions can be made based on sound practice. Other barriers to setting high expectations in the least restrictive environments are: a lack of trained staff, time (who has time to worry about developing *and* following a truly individualized education plan-IEP) and, of course, **m-o-n-e-y!**

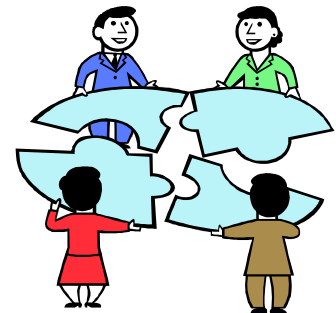
Q. *How do we overcome the barriers to developing a good transition plan?*

A. Even though the law is quite specific about transition, the burden for making it a reality still falls on parents. We must continue to push the system to develop trained staff and dedicate the time, as well as other resources, to help our children have better outcomes. Get involved with your child's school, your school district, and your community--at all levels. Contact parent information centers. **Parents Reaching Out (PRO)** is New Mexico's federally funded Parent Training and Information Center (PTI). PRO offers assistance and information on transition (1-800-524-5176). Parents work wonders when they are "in the know!" Your ideas may be just the "untapped" resource that schools need to make a difference in the life of your child and many others!

Q. *Are there strategies that we might use to help ensure success?*

A. Yes, through the IEP process:

- Identify the title of the school personnel who will be responsible for each activity.
- Identify by when each task or activity will be completed.
- Identify how progress will be measured and how often progress is reported to parents.
- Follow through, if (as a parent) you commit to something. Your follow through sends a message of commitment to everyone.
- Involve the student and encourage him/her to participate as a team member. Better yet, give him/her "the leading role!"
- Build on the student's successes to overcome weaknesses. We often forget that we all need to experience success.



Preparing for Transition Planning

It is unlikely that anyone is more concerned about your child's future than you. As you learned about your child's disability and became better aware of the impact it would have on his/her life and yours, you may have avoided thinking about his/her adult years. Transition planning will help you, maybe even force you, to think about your child's adult years and the inevitable changes that lie ahead.

Understanding your Changing Role

As parents, you bring a wealth of information about your son or daughter that has great significance in the process of devising a plan for transition. You will provide details about your child's traits, interests, aptitudes, behaviors, and abilities that you have observed in the context of family life and activities. Your observations, along with an expression of your values, help provide the transition team with a deeper understanding of what services may be necessary and appropriate for your young adult.

You are uniquely positioned to model attitudes, work habits, interpersonal skills, and appropriate self-confidence for your child. You will serve as advocates who are informed about transition planning and who seek out available services and agencies. Your role will change from "being in charge" to financial planner, teacher, mentor, helper, friend, and confidant. You will become a "Super Sleuth" – a seeker and finder of information. The hard part begins as you help your young adult realize the value of that information. Then you need to step back and let him/her "own it." (This process gives new meaning to the word patience!)

You will fill the role of record keeper when you recognize the value of saving written information about your experiences with educators, medical care providers, and service agencies. These records will be very useful in developing and monitoring your child's transition plan. Such documentation will be essential as you oversee how the plan is working. As you monitor the plan to make certain that the good intentions of the transition plan are being met, you may request follow-up meetings if adjustments are needed. It is important that you teach your child about the importance of record keeping and show him/her how to keep records organized. Finally, you may act as cheerleaders who encourage your young adult to be a self-advocate in making the plan and pursuing transition goals to realize his/her dreams.

Develop a record-keeping system to help you keep track of which agencies, organizations, and providers have been contacted and the information you have received. You may even want to use "shadow records" to give your student practice in keeping records. A "shadow record" is a duplicate set of records kept by your young adult to help him/her learn this life-skill.

You can organize your records by having separate file folders, large envelopes, or sections in a three-ring notebook for each agency. Keep all letters you receive and a copy of any letter you send. Review your records to refresh your memory about issues that may require follow up. *More information about record keeping can be found on page 14 of this booklet.*

Transition Tips from a Parent's Point of View

Parent to Parent Connection: As parents, we can learn from others who have been through some of the challenges we face as we try to navigate the systems in our lives. The following tips were shared by a parent in the hope that they might help other families.



- You are the only person in your child's life who can provide consistency and coordinated support. In one year, one of my child's Special Ed. teachers changed three times. You and your child must take the lead.
- Believe in your child and support his/her decisions, dreams, and goals.
- You must serve as the Case Manager to ensure that your son or daughter receives the services he/she needs and deserves.
- Maintain a copy of all school documents and keep records of all phone calls and meetings.
- Because of the shortage of teachers, you may have a teacher on waiver who does not know about transition planning or other requirements. Teach them.
- A school administrative representative is required at all IEP meetings. If they are not there, you shouldn't be there either. Request that the meeting be reconvened when an administrator will be present. (The administrator's signature on the IEP form should not be made after the fact!)
- Children do not just start being independent; you must include them in the decisions and choices about their lives, even if you don't always agree with their choices. Teach your children self-advocacy skills.
- Adult services won't come to find you and your young adult. You must find them and be persistent in searching and applying for services.
- Praise your school personnel when they do something good. They will be more willing to help you if you are firm, fair, and supportive.

Helping Your Child Develop a Vision

Your son or daughter is an important member of the IEP team. His or her input is essential in developing an effective transition plan. Your child's preferences, goals and dreams are the driving force of the plan. Encourage your young adult to dream — no matter how far fetched the dream may appear to be at the time. When your child has a say in planning the future, he or she is more likely to be committed to making the plan work. A young adult who is following his or her dreams will be motivated from within to see them become a reality.



A key to transition for your young adult and others in the family is discovering a vision for the future. Sometimes the nature of a disability makes it difficult or impossible for people to think through or talk about their ideas and feelings. As a result they may become dependent on others. This may mean that they do not have experience with an essential life skill called *decision-making*. The following suggestions may help prepare a young adult to participate more fully in developing a transition plan.

- Begin by asking simple questions: Where do you want to spend time as an adult? Doing what? With whom?
- Compare his/her skills and abilities with those who succeed. Get information from other people with the same disability. They may have creative solutions to common problems.
- If your young adult is interested in an occupation clearly beyond their abilities, find out the reasons for interest in this job. The location of a job may be the main attraction.
- Discuss other jobs related to his/her interest, which might be a better fit for his/her strengths.
- Help your young adult learn about his/her disability and how it may affect his/her future.
- Talk about things that your young adult would like to do independently as an adult and ways to learn those skills.
- Consider what support services or technology may be needed to make your young adult's vision a reality. Tap resources to help figure out who could help make it happen.

If your child's disability makes it impossible for him or her to answer even simple questions, it may be helpful to visit with other members of your family or a trusted support parent. Discuss your hopes and dreams for your child's future. Answer the same questions with a subtle twist. For example, "How do we want him/her to spend time as an adult? With whom? What supports will be needed? What needs to happen for these dreams to become a reality?" Seek out information about people who have pursued inventive ways of countering the isolation that threatened the future of their loved ones with profound disabilities. *Parents Reaching Out* can provide Parent to Parent support and other resources to help families make connections for their young adult with disabilities.

Every child, even a child with a complex disability, has unique needs, interests, and preferences. By recognizing and addressing them appropriately, the quality of life can be enhanced for your young adult and you can support the plan with less reluctance and more enthusiasm. ARC of New Mexico, with the Community Support Alliance at the Center for Development and Disability (UNM), offers support through its Advocates Alliance program in providing assistance to identify personal dreams, and resources using the PATH process. PATH stands for Planning Alternate Tomorrows with Hope. For more information on PATH, contact the Advocates Alliance at 1-800-358-6493 or the Center for Development and Disability at 1-800-827-6380.

Record Keeping

Good record keeping can provide valuable information that will supply keys to a successful future as your child moves through school and transitions to life beyond high school. Records, including each Individualized Education Program written for your child, provide documentation to show what has worked and what has not. You can avoid the lost time, frustration, and wasted energy of repeating something that hasn't worked in the past when your documentation shows the results. Your records can help you and your young adult as you work with educators, service providers, and agencies to develop a successful plan for the future. If you haven't already set up a record keeping system, the time to start is now!



There are many ways to keep records. We recommend keeping records in order by date. Begin each section with the most recent information. A good way to organize your records is to use a notebook system. Some families use a notebook for each year their child is in school. Other families organize information in notebooks according to topic. You'll need to decide what type of record keeping works best for you. To get started, you'll need: one 3 ring binder, a package of dividers, and a 3-hole punch or plastic sheet protectors (total cost: about \$12.00). Plastic sheet protectors let you store your records without damaging any written parts of documents. Label the dividers with titles like: IEPs, Evaluations, Reports, Correspondence, Phone Calls, School Notices, and Work Samples. Families of children with extensive medical needs may want to have a separate notebook for medical information.

- **IEPs:** This will be a chronological record of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that have been written for your child. It should include: team's recommendations; progress towards goals; how progress will be measured (plus any reports that address this progress); and a record of reports between home, school, and other agencies.
- **Evaluations:** Keep copies of all evaluations and recommendations. Evaluations are the first place the team will look when trying to determine educational programming.
- **Doctor's Reports / Agency Reports:** These reports add yet another piece to the puzzle. You and the IEP team will certainly want to look at any agency or doctor's reports that might have a bearing on your child's success at school. These reports may provide important information. Be sure to keep copies of all shot records.
- **Correspondence:** Keep copies of all correspondence sent and received.
- **Phone Calls:** Keep a log of phone calls. It is very important to document the date and time of the call, who you spoke with, the subject of the call, and the call's outcome.
- **School Notices:** The district is required to notify you at different times while your child is in school. The district will send you notice of meetings, notices of evaluations, prior written notices of proposal (PWN), and other communications. Keep all correspondence.
- **Work Samples:** Keep examples of your child's work. Don't just keep the good ones. Collection of the student's work and recommendations are being used more frequently to measure progress and may be more accurate than a formal assessment.

It Is Not About Letting Go... It's Letting Them Grow!

"Nothing will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must first be overcome."

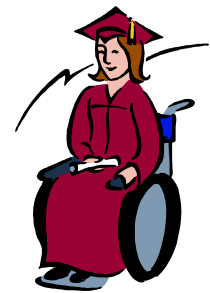
Samuel Johnson

It may be difficult for you to allow and encourage your young adult with disabilities to strike out on his or her own. It is easier when preparations have been made in advance. You will be less traumatized if you view "letting them grow" as a process and use transition planning as an approach that lays solid groundwork for successful independence. As your son or daughter moves toward adulthood and independence, you can encourage him or her to make choices and discipline yourself not to interfere. You may fear that he or she may fail at a new task or be treated poorly by others. You must recognize that risk-taking is essential for personal growth, ultimate well-being, and long term happiness.



The goals and objectives of the transition IEP can include specifics that address concerns about your young adult's ability to function safely. Transition planning provides you the opportunity and obligation to make certain those concerns are addressed. As the plan is implemented and monitored, you can assess progress toward goals while your young adult makes choices, experiences consequences, evaluates outcomes, and applies skills to new circumstances.

When you let your young adult make choices, you may experience feelings of fear, anxiety, and insecurity that match the emotional turmoil you felt at the initial diagnosis. You may find it valuable to turn to other parents who are facing the challenges of transition for encouragement and support. You will find renewed strength when you share your feelings with others who understand your fears and hopes. You can sympathize and reassure one another when difficulties arise and celebrate together when positive accomplishments are made. As you loosen your grip, you embark on a new leg of your journey in experiences with disabilities. It does not need to weaken the parent-child relationship, but it will change it to some degree. The love that once moved you to protect your child will now motivate you to show your support and encouragement for maximizing your young adult's independence.



**You may be disappointed if you fail,
But you are doomed if you don't try" -Beverly Sills**

Advocacy and Self-Determination



Advocacy is an essential skill for all stages of our lives, but for people with disabilities it has additional significance. It is initially the responsibility of parents who have children with disabilities. Depending on the extent of the disability, it is best to help your child be a self-advocate as soon as possible. The skill of self-advocacy can help your son or daughter take control of his or her life. Young adults learn skills from each mistake and success that will prepare them for the day when parents or school personnel are no longer available to manage their lives. Parents can encourage self-advocacy skills in many ways.

- Give your child opportunities to make decisions and experience the consequences.
- Teach your child about his/her disability and how it impacts his/her life.
- Practice role-play situations to help your child learn to be a self-advocate.
- Allow and encourage independence.

People with disabilities, their family members, educators, and service providers can all be advocates who heighten disability awareness within their community. Sharing information with others about issues like accessibility to buildings and services makes the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) a reality for those who do not recognize or understand the barriers. There are many ways to make your voice heard regarding these issues. Conversations with neighbors, business owners, relatives, friends, and government officials will inform them of needed changes. You can serve on local or government committees to support state and local legislation that provides more and better opportunities to include people with disabilities. Disability support groups provide an opportunity to be a part of a collective voice. When communities are aware of the value of people with disabilities, there is a better chance that they will be included in employment, residential, and recreational opportunities.

Transition Planning Areas

Once you have a vision for the future, the next step is to identify important planning areas. Successful transition from school to life in the community as an adult is determined by the skills your child has developed and the resources that can be accessed to meet their needs. The basic components include:

- Community participation
- Employment
- Health care and medical issues
- Independent living/Self-advocacy
- Training and education



The information in this section is intended to be used as a stepping stone by parents, students with disabilities, and others in considering a child's current skills and comparing them to those needed for a productive future. The key is to involve young adults in the planning process. Help them identify the skills they need to develop and encourage them to take ownership of their IEP goals. The questions are designed as conversation starters and planning reminders to ensure a future that is filled with opportunities, rather than regrets about what should have been.

If your young adult is unable to answer these questions independently, you can use an interview format. You may need to involve family members and others who know your son or daughter to determine the best choices. Encourage your child to participate as fully as possible and make your conversations an enjoyable experience. You may want to have more frequent discussions for shorter periods of time as you begin planning the path that will lead in the right direction.

What are some of the basic foundations of adolescent development that should be considered as transition planning occurs? There are many institutions, programs, and researchers who are involved in youth and adolescent development, working for positive results in the lives of all youth. Although each may use slightly different words to define essential elements, there is uniformity in concepts. The Center for Youth Development and Policy Research has found that *youth need:*

- *Academic skills and competencies*
- *A sense of safety and structure*
- *Self-worth and self-esteem*
- *A feeling of mastery over their future*
- *Belonging and membership*
- *Responsibility and autonomy*
- *Self-awareness and spirituality*

Youth also need motivational, emotional, and strategic supports to succeed in life. They must experience opportunities to learn about their world, explore ideas and interests, and believe they belong to their school and local communities and have something to give back that makes a difference. They also need meaningful services that engage them in education, health, and employment by using relevant instruction. In addition, they need caring support from adults, and challenging opportunities to express themselves and to take on new roles in groups.

(Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, 2003; Ferber, Pittman, & Marshall, 2002; University of Minnesota, 1999; Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1995; Simpson, 2001; America's Promise-The Alliance for Youth, 2000).

Community Participation

As parents, educators, and others plan for transition, one of the most significant areas to consider is community participation. A young adult's skills in building relationships and developing friendships can play a large role in the quality of life he/she will enjoy as they leave the security they may have felt in school. In addition to having a career and a place to live, successful adults have discovered ways to have fun and become involved in the community. Very often this area is the last area to be considered in planning for transition. It should be one of the first considerations. Isolation and dependency do not foster quality of life or successful futures. Work with your child to consider the following:

- What are your hobbies and interests outside of school?
- How much time do you expect to spend on them as an adult?
- How much money will you be able to budget to spend each month for entertainment and/or recreation?
- How will you travel to participate in community leisure activities?
- What services do you need to participate in the community?
- Where will you meet new friends?

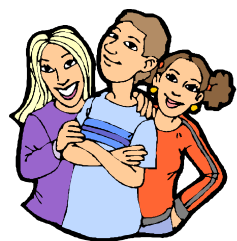


An area of planning that is often overlooked is your son's or daughter's SOCIAL life. Family is important, but your son or daughter needs friends and relationships separate from you. Parents of older persons with developmental disabilities often reflect on their failure to ensure their son's or daughter's social connections. Oftentimes, as students leave high school, they may go to work at a vocational site. They may not maintain earlier friendships because their friends do not work at the same location. We urge families to make these social connections for their children if they cannot make them on their own.

Facilitating Friendships

Successful members in any community are those individuals who can interact with others and form long-lasting relationships with others. Young adults with challenges will need support in developing relationships that will help them become active participants in the community. Teachers and support staff can help nurture friendships. Parents and family members play a key role in creating opportunities to build relationships through the types of activities they choose for the family. *Friendships develop because people have something in common.*

Friendships between students evolve naturally with shared interests and proximity. In any community or neighborhood, common interests bring people together. Friendships and the benefits of building social skills go beyond school years and translate into successful lifelong experiences for everyone! Friends can share their highest hopes, deepest fears, and most impossible dreams. Friends can help one another tackle the biggest problems in the simplest way. They can turn an everyday challenge into extraordinary solutions, if we unlock the doors!



Inclusive settings within the school and surrounding community provide opportunities to build on the strengths and gifts of each individual. Each person has something to contribute and deserves respect from others. It's important to plan experiences and develop social goals that will build confidence and self-worth. Transition activities that encourage young adults to get to know one another create paths for new friendships and teach life-skills for problem-solving and tolerance.

Employment

“Every youth has some skill that, if nurtured, will provide them the opportunity to make money for the rest of their life.”
Larry Korterling – Appalachian State University

Fact: People with disabilities are 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed or under-employed than people without disabilities.

How can we improve the odds for our sons and daughters? First of all, we need to have high expectations. Employment is possible for everyone - including youth with significant disabilities. While our students are still in high school they need to have meaningful work experiences which suit their interests and abilities. A meaningful work experience means paid or unpaid time spent in a work setting that the young adult is interested in exploring. Further education or training after high school will give your young adult more skills which will increase employment opportunities.

Career Planning

Identifying possible careers is very important to building a successful future for every young adult. Career planning helps students set goals and identify how to reach that goal. For example, your daughter may want to work with animals. You can take this information to the IEP team so she can begin learning about jobs where she could work with animals. The IEP team can then make sure that she takes classes to learn the necessary skills. Educators can arrange related work or volunteer opportunities which can be written into her IEP.

Find out what School-to-Careers activities exist at your school. No one can be excluded because of a disability. Use the following questions and the *Employment Traits Assessment* on page 54 as you work with your young adult to identify skills or areas to be addressed in the Transition Plan.

- What kind of work would you like to do?
- What kind of work environment would be most comfortable for you?
Indoors? Outdoors? In a quiet area? In a noisy area? With others? On your own?
- What kind of training do you think you will need for that work?
- Will you need on-the-job support? For how long?



As you begin discussing plans for employment, there are some important activities you may want to consider or services you may want to investigate for successful transition.

- * Ask for a vocational assessment to find out what you can do best.
- * Find out what School to Career activities and career courses are available in school.
- * Seek work experience in school/community (volunteer, work study, or job shadowing).
- * Learn about supported employment services that help you learn to do a job successfully.
- * Learn what habilitative day training programs are available for students, if this is a need.
- * Ask about your school district's Community Transition to Adult Programs or other programs for students ages 18-22(see page 31).
- * Find out about adult services and eligibility requirements.

Employment Options

There are many things to consider about the post high school employment options for your young adult. Many of these decisions should have been initiated early on through the IEP process. A well thought out **Transition Plan** should be established. What are your dreams for your child as he/she moves toward adulthood? What are his/her dreams? As a family you will need to ask these questions and investigate every possibility.

Employment should reflect your son's or daughter's personal interests and strengths. This gives your young adult the opportunity to make appropriate choices for the future. Many times, other people make decisions for our children. If their decisions do not reflect our children's interests, or wishes, our children can be set up for failure.

Sheltered Workshops – A sheltered workshop is an employment setting specifically for people with disabilities. Individuals are trained to perform a specific task that takes place at a set location with supervision. Other individuals with disabilities are also employed at this location. A sheltered workshop can provide work experience, the opportunity to socialize with peers, on the job training, pay, and a chance for respite for families. Employees in a sheltered workshop, though, often receive low pay, have limited opportunities for advancement, and may not ever enter the competitive workplace. If you are considering a sheltered workshop setting, here are some questions to consider when visiting potential sheltered workshop programs:

- How long has the program been in existence and how many clients does your program serve?
- What kind of training do you give new staff? What is your staff turnover rate?
- What professionals do you have on staff?
- What is the staffing ratio? Explain how wages are paid.
- What is the program's daily schedule?
- Are there adequate opportunities for making choices?
- Why should we choose you as our provider?

Competitive Employment - Competitive employment can be considered with or without a job coach. A job coach assists an individual with disabilities with on-the-job training. The coach provides ongoing support for the individual's needs so he or she can be successfully employed. As a step towards competitive employment, your young adult will need to create a resume. Every job seeker needs a resume – including youth with disabilities. A resume shows employers that a young adult is organized and understands the steps in the hiring process. Creating a resume could be an IEP goal. A resume should include volunteer activities, job shadowing, and relevant coursework.

When your son or daughter looks for employment, don't forget your own personal networks. Most job opportunities come from personal relationships. You can make a list of all the people you interact with on a personal, social, or professional level. There may be one or two that could mentor your son or daughter or maybe even hire him or her.

What does an employer look for when hiring a new employee?

Creating a good job match is a two way street. It's important for youth to know what skills and traits a potential employer needs in an employee. This information gives the young person and the transition team the opportunity to build essential job skills. The checklist on *page 54* might be a useful tool to use in targeting these skills or providing supports in the workplace. The typical traits looked for in employees are often grouped into categories which may include:

<i>Punctuality</i>	<i>Communication</i>
<i>Dependability</i>	<i>Interpersonal skills</i>
<i>Respects self and others</i>	<i>Use of transportation</i>
<i>Takes pride in work</i>	<i>Flexibility</i>
<i>Appearance</i>	<i>Job productivity</i>

If needed, an IEP goal can be written to develop any of these traits.

Accommodations

At some point your young adult will need to decide whether or not to disclose his/her disability to a potential employer. There are pros and cons to disclosure and it is a personal decision. There is no law that says people have to disclose a disability. It will be necessary, though, if your young adult will need accommodations or if he or she will seek protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This is another area for a possible IEP goal. The student's goal would be to understand his or her disability and to practice talking about it. Students can role play job interviews. They can learn how to answer interview questions and how to handle inappropriate or illegal questions.

Another IEP goal could be identifying potential accommodations needed for a particular job. Youth can think about their career interests and determine what they would need to be successful in a job. If a teen can show a potential employer how he or she can perform in the work setting, the employer knows that the teen is highly motivated to be an excellent employee.

For ideas of possible job accommodations, the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) has hundreds of fact sheets on specific disabilities and how to accommodate for them on the job. This free resource, which is funded by the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Policy, can be found at www.askjan.org

What about self-employment? Oftentimes this option is not considered, but it can be a good solution. A young adult can work at doing something he or she is talented at or truly loves. For example, your son may be skilled with computers, but he may have trouble completing a job interview. For artists, the internet can be used as a marketplace for products youth produce. Vocational Rehabilitation and Social Security PASS (Plan for Achieving Self Support) programs can provide planning and funding help.



Health and Medical Planning

Another part of your son's or daughter's independence is responsibility for his or her personal health care. You must make decisions based on your young adult's ability to realize the need for health care and to communicate adequately with health professionals. It is also recommended that you address the issues of sexuality and reproduction.

Financial resources to pay for your young adult's health care must be identified. Medicaid may be available even if your child does not receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Medicaid covers basic dental care after age 21, but prior approval is required for some services. More information can be requested by calling your local Human Services office. The phone number is listed in your phone book under New Mexico State Government-Human Services Department.

Youth who have special health care needs or take medication on a regular basis will need skills and/or supports to maintain their health on their own. *The Health Care Skills Checklist on page 55* is a useful way to determine transition goals in this area. Here are some questions to consider:

- Does my son or daughter understand his/her medical condition and what effect it has on daily living and productivity?
- Does my young adult have the necessary skills to set up medical appointments and/or seek assistance for health care in case of an emergency?
- Does my young adult have the skills to self-administer medication?
- What services or supports are needed to live successfully in the community?



Access to medical & dental services

Assistive Technology

Insurance

Counseling

Managing personal medications

Knowing when and how to seek medical help

Personal care services

Contact the agencies below for more information on these these health related topics:

ARC of New Mexico

505-883-4630 or 1-800-358-6493

Center for Development and Disability Resource Center

505-272-3000 or 1-800-827-6380

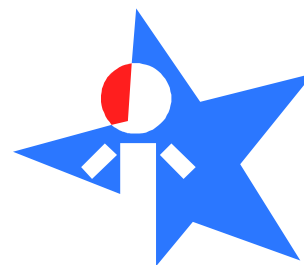
Parents Reaching Out

Family to Family Health Information Center

505-247-0192 or 1-800-524-5176

Health Care Transition

Here are some important issues to consider and practical steps to take when your child becomes an adolescent—and he/she is ready to assume increased responsibility for his/her own health care. As a family, you will need to plan a transfer of care from the pediatrician to an adult provider. Long-range planning should begin by age 14. Make a plan that is specific to your adolescent and his/her health care needs.



- If your son or daughter has a special health care need or disability significant enough to interfere with making independent financial and medical decisions, you will need to file a petition to the court to maintain guardianship. For more information on guardianship, see *page 47*. This should be filed one year (but no less than 6 months) before your adolescent turns 18.
- Discuss with your pediatrician when to transfer your son's or daughter's care to an adult provider. Ask for help to find appropriate adult health care providers. Visit each provider with your son or daughter to determine if they will be a good match.
- Ask your pediatrician to transfer your adolescent's medical records to your new adult care provider. Ask your provider or nurse to identify others who can help manage your adolescent's care and ask who on their staff can assist you in care coordination.
- Ask the health care provider how and when age-appropriate information will be shared with your young adult. This includes information about the disability or chronic illness, sexuality, preparing for parenthood, genetic counseling, work opportunities, and leisure activities.
- Help your sons and daughters develop an understanding about the importance of the medication they take and encourage them to make their own health care appointments. Encourage your adolescent to prepare for doctor visits by writing down questions in advance. Help them begin to keep their own health records and notes.
- Talk with them about their condition and/or disability in a way that can be understood. Choose the key points and decide how to make them clear.
- Teach your young adult about his or her insurance coverage.



Health Care Advocacy Skills for Adolescents and Young Adults



- Learn about your condition or disability
- Know how to explain your health care needs. Make a list of all the things you need to keep yourself healthy.
- Keep a record of your appointments, important medical history, phone numbers of doctors, and your medications.
- Begin to make your own medical appointments.
- Write down questions for your doctor or nurse practitioner before your visit.
- Spend time alone with your doctor or nurse practitioner to discuss your health concerns.
- Learn about health insurance and health care finances.
- Talk to your pediatric doctor or nurse practitioner about when is a good time for you to transfer your care.
- See your primary care provider on a regular basis to help you stay healthy.
- Meet adult providers before you begin your transitions.
- Know the warning signs that mean you need emergency help. Carry emergency information with you. Check out the Emergency Information Form in the Resources section of this book.
- Understand the medications you are taking. Learn their names and when you take them. Know how to call the pharmacy and how to fill your prescription.
- Know how to order and take care of any special equipment.

Finding and Using Adult Health Care

Adapted from: MCHB Healthy and Ready To Work Projects

As young people grow from childhood into adulthood, many will move from care by pediatricians into adult medicine. This can be a difficult adjustment, and you may have many questions. How do you find a doctor who will meet your medical needs, that will be covered by your health plan, and who will give you the care you are looking for? Here are some suggestions for making a successful transition to a new doctor.

Before you start looking for a new doctor, think about what you want:

- Is where the office located important?
- Will you need help with transportation?
- Do you need an office that is wheelchair accessible or do you need other special assistance in the doctor's office?
- Are office hours convenient?
- How do you contact the doctor at other times?
- What hospital do you want to use, and is this doctor on the staff there?
- Do you want someone who will take time with you during an office visit or are you comfortable being seen by someone who is "good" in his or her field but perhaps does not have the best bedside manner?
- Is it important that this new doctor is knowledgeable about your special health care needs or do you think you can provide that information or connect the new doctor with those who could provide medical insight?

Ways to look for a new doctor include:

- Ask your current doctor.
- Check out the doctor your parents or other family members see.
- Call a family support group or adult disability agency for suggestions.
- Ask adults who have health needs similar to yours for recommendations.
- Refer to your health insurance company booklet of approved providers.
- Ask a Vocational Rehabilitation or Independent Living Center counselor.
- Find a university health center (sometimes there are research studies going on which offer free care).
- Contact your local Medical Society, American Academy of Family Practitioners, or Internal Medicine Society either through the Yellow Pages or on their national websites.

Since your wellness depends on the medical services you receive, it is important that you are comfortable talking with your new doctor and feel that he or she understands your concerns. Consider scheduling a "get-acquainted" interview before you make a final choice of a new doctor. You will have to pay for this visit, as it is NOT covered by insurance benefits. An ideal interview time is about 15 to 30 minutes and should not waste your time or the doctor's. The best time to see a new physician is when your health condition is stable so you aren't asking for crisis care while seeing if you can develop a working relationship.

Think about (and write down) questions that are important to you:

- Is the doctor knowledgeable about your health issues and/or is he or she willing to learn from you and from previous doctors?
- Do you like the communication style of the doctor and the office staff?
- Are you satisfied with office practices and access during an emergency or in urgent situations?
- Do you have access to hospitals and specialists if you need them?

Doctors who like to care for children are different from doctors who like to care for adults. For this reason, young adults seeking health care need certain skills.

Skills needed by a young adult in order to successfully manage his/her health care:

- Ability and willingness to tell the doctor about your history, current symptoms, lifestyle, and self-care in just a few minutes (including carrying your own records and a summary of your medical history).
- Ability to ask questions about your condition and how it will affect your school, work, recreation, and social life.
- Ability to tell the doctor about your needs for education, technology, and accommodations, and how your condition affects or might be affected by these.
- Willingness to follow medical recommendations that have been mutually developed by you and your doctor.
- More independence in following up with referrals and keeping all agencies informed.
- More involvement in keeping yourself well with diet and weight control, exercise, and recreation.
- Following medication, treatment, and hygiene regimens.
- Limiting risk-taking behaviors (such as drinking alcohol, smoking, taking non-prescription drugs, or unsafe sexual practices).
- Getting help when you feel angry, lonely, or sad for long periods.
- Being more aware of your physical and mental symptoms and health needs before you have a serious medical crisis, and knowing when to inform your doctor.
- Developing a plan of action for when you need emergency care: when to consult with the doctor, what hospital to report to, what care you want and do not want, and naming someone who can let your wishes be known if you cannot (health care surrogate).
- Understanding how the health care benefits/insurance plan you have works for you: when to call for pre-approval, how to get reimbursements, what services are not covered, and how to file an appeal if you do not agree with decisions from the plan.
- Recognizing that as you become more capable in directing your care, *you*, not your parents, should make medical appointments, be the most knowledgeable about your health needs, know when to seek guidance in solving problems, and demonstrate that you are capable and competent and ready for adulthood!

Independent Living

Transition planning areas are often interrelated. The skills your young adult will need to participate successfully in the community and manage health care needs are part of the building blocks needed for independent living. It is important to take time to have thoughtful discussions as a family as you explore every aspect of Independent Living. Success as an adult depends on the pieces you help put into place in the Transition Plan of the IEP. Don't be caught off guard by assuming that things will just fall in to place when the time comes. These are big decisions. Transition planning should help you and your son or daughter begin to look confidently toward the future.

The questions below will help you and your young adult begin thinking about the skills needed for the level of independent living that is a good match for your son or daughter.

1. Where would you like to live? (Will you live with your family or on your own? Will you live with a friend or several friends?)
2. What skills will you need to learn? (ex. cooking, cleaning, shopping, using transportation)
3. How will you take care of your health needs?
4. How will you manage financially?
5. What experiences have you had with making choices and decisions at home? at school?

No matter where you live as an adult, there are important skills needed for independence. Don't take anything for granted. Failing to consider even the most insignificant skill may have a negative impact on a young person's ability to live as independently as possible in the adult world. Consider the following as you prepare for transition.

Housing Options

- Apartment
- Dormitory
- Group home (community living)
- Host home
- Remain in family home
- Skilled care facility
- Supported living arrangements
- Supervised apartment

Life Skills

These are some of the skills you will need to learn so that you can live on your own.

- Cleaning
- Cooking
- Laundry
- Personal hygiene
- Shopping

Financial Management

Taking care of your bills is an essential part of becoming an adult.

- Budget planning
- Managing a bank account
- Public assistance services
- Social Security work incentive programs
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Trusts, wills & guardianship

Transportation

Finding and using suitable transportation will help you be more independent.

- Independent (bicycle, car, etc.)
- Specialized
- Public (bus, taxi, etc.)
- Other

Remember: IEP goals can be written for any of these areas.

Considering Every Option

As our children mature, many parents choose to have their son or daughter become as independent as possible. Chances are we will not always be around in our young adults' lives. We should try to be as prepared as possible to ensure that they will be taken care of when we are gone. This process can be started early in their adult life or later. This is a personal decision made by families.

Day Placement

If employment is not an appropriate option for your son or daughter, you might be considering a day placement as part of their plan for independent living. A day placement should offer recreation and leisure activities for the individual. It should be a place for individuals to have the opportunity to socialize and develop friendships.



Questions to consider for day placement:

- What is the staffing ratio? What training has the staff received? Is it ongoing training?
- What is a typical daily schedule for this program?
- Is the program individualized? Will my young adult have opportunities to make choices?
- What are the changing facilities and do they ensure privacy?
- How would they address the feeding or eating needs of my son or daughter?
- How can they accommodate the special needs of my son or daughter?
- What do they supply and what supplies need to come from home?
- How does the program access emergency medical care?

Residential Providers

There are agencies that provide housing and staff support in the community. This is an alternative to living at home with the family that you may wish to consider. Support and services range from minimal to maximum depending upon the needs of the individual. Very often, making a parent connection with a family that has made this choice will help you in this decision.



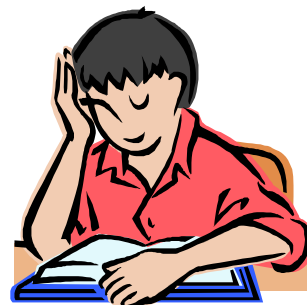
Questions to consider when interviewing Residential Providers:

- How long has the program been in existence?
- What is the back up supervision for emergencies?
- What kind of training do they give new staff? What professionals do they have on staff?
- What is the nursing coverage? Who dispenses medication?
- What protections are in effect to guard against abuse and neglect?
- Regarding SSI: What portion does the program keep, and what is available for the client's use?
- Explain the accountability system regarding the individual's personal money?
- Will this agency be able to provide the staff ratio and supervision necessary to meet the Individual Service Plan (ISP) requirements for my son or daughter?

Training and Education

Another important step to take towards building your young adult's future is determining what additional training and education they will need. You will also need to locate the best place to get it. The questions below will help you identify goals in order to target areas of training. Transition planning should focus on the specific steps to realize those goals. Spend time with your child and involve others who truly care about your child to help explore the possibilities. Don't lose sight of the Dream! *Think about your son's or daughter's best interests as you consider the answers to these questions.*

1. What type of further education or training does my son or daughter need?
2. Where would he or she get this education or training?
 - Adult Provider
 - Applied Technology
 - Apprenticeship Program
 - College or University (4 years or more)
 - Community Transition to Adult Programs
 - Community College (2 year program)
 - On-the Job Training
 - Trade or Business School
3. What supports and services will my son or daughter need to successfully complete his/her schooling?
 - Identifying necessary accommodations
 - Locating Disability Services
 - Organizational Skills
 - Study Skills
 - Assistance with submitting necessary applications
 - Time Management
 - Understanding entrance requirements



Evaluations for Post High School Training and Education

Evaluations that a student will need within a few years of leaving school should be included in transition planning and considered as a related service in the development of a student's IEP. In addition, for young adults who meet the criteria for vocational rehabilitation services, be sure to include the DVR coordinator in IEP meetings. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides an assessment to achieve suitable employment outcomes for eligible students.

Families and students with disabilities who are considering a college or vocational training setting for education beyond high school are encouraged to request our companion publication, ***The Journey Continues***. This transition booklet covers more detailed information on the timelines, requirements, and resources for students who will pursue their dreams through degree or certificate programs in institutions of higher learning.

Community Transition to Adult Programs

The May before students enter a Community Transition Program, they graduate from their own high school, receiving a CERTIFICATE OF TRANSITION. When they complete the Community Transition Program, they will receive a DIPLOMA from their home high school.

Community Transition to Adult Programs (18-22 year old transition program) are offered through the public school system. They provide a structured day program for students with severe disabilities by allowing them to sample a variety of adult service providers in the community. (*In Albuquerque Public Schools, these programs are either called ACCESS or CTAP.*) Day programs are designed for students (ages 18-22) who intend to work after they finish high school. Students participate in a range of activities (educational skill building, daily living, personal / social and occupational) to help them become as independent as possible within the community when they leave the public school system. Students are no longer participating in a typical high school setting but, instead, the community becomes their classroom.

These programs offer cooperative work experience, independent living, and recreation / leisure skills development. Even though students' goals and objectives were focused on many of these skills in the past, this program offers more opportunities to help them become productive citizens in society. The goal of transition services is to maximize the self-sufficiency, employment opportunities, independent living skills, and positive community involvement of individuals with disabilities. These services will provide your young adult with opportunities to develop skills and abilities so he/she can have more choices and satisfaction in life.



Functional Vocational Evaluation

A functional vocational evaluation can be conducted which will provide information about job or career interests, aptitudes, and skills. Information is gathered through situational assessments in the setting where the job is performed. This practical assessment can include observations as well as formal and informal measures. This information can be used to refine educational experiences, courses of study, and employment activities / strategies in the statement of needed transition services. IEP teams have options to consider in gathering the most realistic information for a functional vocational evaluation:

- Student participation in community-based situational vocational assessment program.
- Develop a vocational profile based on existing functional information.
- Provide opportunities for job sampling in the community.
- Contact agencies that provide functional vocational assessment in the community.
- Meet with employers to develop a situational vocational assessment site.
- Collect functional information regarding the student's vocational interests and abilities.
- Use a computer program such as the **Choicemaker Self-Determination Curriculum** to determine vocational interests. These programs assist students in developing self-determination skills so they can choose goals and take action towards their goals.
- Meet with the school counselor to affirm vocational interests and align graduation plan.
- Refer to an appropriate professional to conduct a comprehensive vocational evaluation.
- Conduct formal aptitude tests.

Entry Guidelines for Community Transition to Adult Programs

(Much of the information below was provided by Albuquerque Public Schools and applies to their CTAP program). Families living in other communities in New Mexico are encouraged to check with their school district to find out about similar programs in their area and the requirements that have been set for these programs.)

Entry into this program should be considered on an individual basis. The IEP team will determine student referrals based on the following considerations:

- Students must be at least 18 years of age with significant support needs for transitioning into the adult world.
- The structure of the day placement should be in the least restrictive environment for the student.
- Student and family are ready for transition from the Community Transition Program into the adult provider setting and / or the community by the time the student is 22. (Albuquerque Public Schools CTAP guidelines recommend transition within 2 years.)
- Student has participated in CRL (Community Referenced Learning) and / or work experiences at the high school level.
- Student has a vocational goal as part of their transition plan and is a candidate for supported / sheltered employment.
- Student's eligibility for adult services and support has been established (DD Waiver application has been made and eligibility has been determined).
- Family and student understand that the main focus of the Community Transition Program is vocational skill development, employment, community access, and independent living skills.
- Alternative transportation is to be arranged by the family (in Albuquerque – Sun Van, city bus, family transportation, etc.) as a step toward adult world explorations.
- Related services (SLP, OT, etc.) are available based on individual need. Adult agencies may also provide related services as the student transitions into adult programs in the community.



Setting Priorities for Transition Planning

Now that you have considered the transition planning areas, the next step is to prioritize the needs identified according to your family's values, plans, and concerns. Consider including other family members, especially siblings, who can provide support and encouragement to your child, when you are no longer available. As you work together reviewing the information below, we recommend that you use the list to indicate the most important goals that you want to see accomplished first. This information will help the team develop a well thought out transition plan through the IEP process.

Set priorities based on what you know about your son or daughter and his/her dreams for the future. Place checks in the boxes that match the dreams you have identified.

Community Participation

- Independent recreational activities
- Organized activities (clubs/team sports)
- Activities with friends
- Classes to develop hobbies/explore interests
- Supported/supervised recreational activities

Employment / Career

- Full / part-time job (competitive employment)
- Full / part-time job w/extra support/supervision
- Supported Employment
- Volunteer work
- Other:

Transportation

- Have driver's license & access to a vehicle
- Walk
- Ride a bicycle

Education / Training

- Adult Provider
- Apprenticeship Program/On-the-job training
- College or University
- Community Transition to Adult Programs
- Trade or Business School

Residential /Living Arrangements

- Independently in a house/apartment
- With a roommate
- Supervised living (group home/apartment)
- With family_____
- Other:_____

*Review each category below. Identify **areas of concern** by placing a check mark in areas that require a special focus in order for your young adult to live as independently as possible.*

Social/Interpersonal Skills

- Making friends
- Setting goals
- Relationships with opposite sex
- Family relationships
- Anger management
- Communicating needs/wants
- Handling legal responsibilities

Personal Concerns

- Hygiene
- Safety
- Mobility
- Personal care
- Money management
- Time Management
- Domestic Skills

Health

- Ongoing care for serious medical condition
- Independence in self-medicating
- Transition to new provider
- Sex Education
- Substance Abuse Information
- AIDS Awareness

Preparing for the Transition IEP

By now you have probably figured out that transition is not just one stop shopping. It is an individualized process that takes time, thought, and planning to create a set of coordinated activities that will prepare your son or daughter for success in the adult world. It should be a good fit for your young adult. The plan for transition is a written part of your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Let's take a look at the steps that should help you be an active participant in the transition IEP meeting.



Communicate on a regular basis with school staff. Notes, phone calls, and informal meetings keep everyone in the know and focused on your young adult's current progress and needs. The school will provide notice of the IEP meeting (at a mutually agreed upon time /place) to develop the transition plan.

Keep good records and take them to the IEP meeting. The record keeping section (page 14) will help you organize your records.

Review the Transition Planning Areas (pages 17-30) to be sure that you have covered all the bases during conversations with your young adult and other significant people in his/her life.

Set priorities. Prepare a list of priorities ahead of time. When you ask questions or share ideas, keep the focus on these priorities.

Decide who you want to invite to the IEP. In addition to school staff, you will want to identify and invite others to the IEP if they will be involved in transition to the adult world. If your son or daughter is capable, he/she should extend the invitations to participants, in cooperation with school personnel.

- It may also be appropriate to invite a *Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor*. The services provided by New Mexico's **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** assist eligible individuals with disabilities to prepare for and engage in gainful employment. DVR provides a variety of services including: assessment, career guidance, counseling and placement, acquisition of assistive technology, medical, and other necessary services. The student must have a training plan in place with measurable objectives and an employment goal which can be reached in 18 months or less. *If DVR services are appropriate, you will want to contact DVR well in advance of the IEP meeting to ensure that a DVR representative will be able to participate in the meeting.* Please check out our Resources section for contact information.
- It may also be appropriate to include representatives of community programs, specialists, mental health workers, and case managers with the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division of the Department of Health. Adult agencies with services that link school experiences with realistic employment and independent living opportunities should be invited to send a representative.

Once you have:

- Encouraged your son or daughter to dream and to share the dream;
- Prioritized your young adult's needs (from your family's perspective);
- Invited those that you want to attend the IEP meeting...

You're ready to design the blueprint for the Bridge to the Future and the path for a successful journey from the school system to adulthood.

IEP Meeting to Develop the Transition Plan

The day has arrived for the meeting to develop your child's transition plan. As a parent, you have spent time and thought to prepare for this moment. You have spent time with your young adult discussing his/her future. You have heard your son's or daughter's dreams. You have used the tools in this book and other information to get ready for this day. You have been in touch with the school staff and know that they have been preparing for this meeting as well.



- The best way to begin the meeting is with introductions. Your young adult can take a “leading role” by introducing the participants who are attending the meeting or asking the individuals to introduce themselves. When it is your turn, as a parent, you may want to take this opportunity to remind everyone how important it is to succeed in developing a meaningful long-range plan.
- Following the introductions, your young adult should be prepared to share his/her dreams for the future. The team builds the plan from here! Remember—the transition plan drives the IEP. Each goal should be planned with the “big picture” in mind!
- To develop a useful transition plan, the IEP team should begin by selecting and agreeing on priority outcomes. *This is the time to share the priorities you have developed as a family.* Other team members may have a different perspective. It is important for team members to share ideas and listen to what is presented by others to set long-range goals covering, at least, the next three to five years. Realistic goals will be selected after the team reviews the present levels of educational performance along with your young adult's strengths and interests.
- It is also important for the team to identify any barriers that exist and select strategies to overcome them. This is also the time to identify opportunities available. Written annual goals should specify ways to overcome the barriers and maximize the use of existing opportunities. Needed services and available resources should be noted as well as specific activities and experiences to help him/her reach the goals.
- The written transition plan in the IEP is specific to the individual needs of the student. It will include measurable short-term objectives related to the goals. The objectives address methods of instruction, appropriate employment, community experiences, options for additional education, related experiences, and necessary supports (including assistive technology, if appropriate). The IEP must contain a written justification for excluding a required planning area as specified by the IDEA.
- The written plan must also specify how different agencies will work together to provide needed services. It will give a date when each objective needs to be completed and list the name of the person or persons responsible.
- The final step is confirming with team members that they understand their responsibilities and agree to them. The Transition Mapping Process described on pages 39-40 can help you keep track of what is needed to ensure a smooth transition process.
- Before leaving the meeting, take time to express your anticipation of successful outcomes and your appreciation to all of the participants for the part they will play in the process.

Developing a good working relationship with team members will help ensure successful outcomes for your young adult's future!

Student Led IEPs

Students are often their own best advocates. It shouldn't be a surprise that they are the ones who know best what they need and want. While this is not a new idea, rarely do schools take advantage of student self-advocacy in their day-to-day operations. Nonetheless, student self-advocacy is especially important as IEP teams make decisions about the student's future and transition to post-school activities.



Change is not always easy. It is uncomfortable treading on new ground. It is much easier to do things the same way, rather than build new paths. The old path may seem easy and more comfortable (especially for adults), but it may not always be in the student's best interest to do things the same old way. It is not surprising to discover that teachers may be somewhat reluctant to implement a student-led IEP program. However, when teachers experience success with this process, they often want to consider how to integrate student-led IEPs into the overall instructional plan for school-wide implementation. Think of the possibilities!

Now, more than ever before, students with disabilities are actively participating in their IEP meetings with abundant support from their teachers and families. Students with disabilities can make significant contributions to their educational plans. They may help draft their IEPs and present information about themselves at the IEP meeting. In some cases, students actually lead the meeting. At the very least, they understand the purpose of the IEP. The adult members of the IEP team play a key role in creating a safe and encouraging setting for the student to "test his wings!" In one situation, a student's peers offered to attend the IEP to share their first-hand experiences about the student's "unique" gifts. What a positive way to gather information about present levels of performance!

Teaching students how to participate in their IEPs is one way of helping them to become better self-advocates. They learn to apply the skills of self-determination, goal setting, and self-evaluation. Self-determination and self-advocacy are interrelated. Self-determination involves making choices based on personal need, interests, and values. Self-advocacy involves the actions that one takes on one's own behalf. Teachers need to capitalize on these skills as they prepare students for involvement in their IEPs. To be a self-advocate, a student needs to understand his/her disability, understand what he/she needs to learn, and know how to get help. Student-led IEPs offer new opportunities. Research has shown that students who lead or participate in their IEPs make informed decisions about their life. They have higher self-esteem. They take ownership of their education and assume responsibility for their future.

Why involve a student in developing his/her IEP?

Recent research indicates that teaching students self-advocacy skills in high school correlates with post high school success. Many students today exit high school without an adequate understanding of their disabilities. They often do not understand their individual strengths and needs or how certain accommodations will enhance their lives. Many students have not developed sufficient knowledge of their civil rights as supported by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This lack of understanding can seriously limit opportunities for students, especially those who attend institutions of higher education. A recent study showed that few students with disabilities take advantage of the resources and accommodations available to them because they must ask for needed services. This requires important self-advocacy skills that they may not have developed in high school. Including self-advocacy skills in the transition plan, with opportunities to practice these skills through student-led IEPs may provide the missing link connecting the student with success well beyond high school.

As parents, how can we help our young adult learn to lead his/her own IEP?

Request that the student have a goal area that is centered on leading his or her own IEP. You may use any of the several benefits mentioned in this section as objectives and then decide how they will be measured and reported to the parents. We also suggest that, as parents, you ask the teacher or teachers what they might need in order to be successful in the area of student-led IEPs. If training is needed, request it through the IEP process.

What things can parents (or schools) do to help a student prepare to participate (or lead) his/her IEP?

Families and teachers can actually set up “practice sessions” to help students become more comfortable about taking part in their IEP. The kitchen table becomes the “conference table” and family or peers become the team. Role playing, mixed with a good dose of humor, can help the student relax and gain confidence. Other resources, such as videos, are available from Parents Reaching Out.

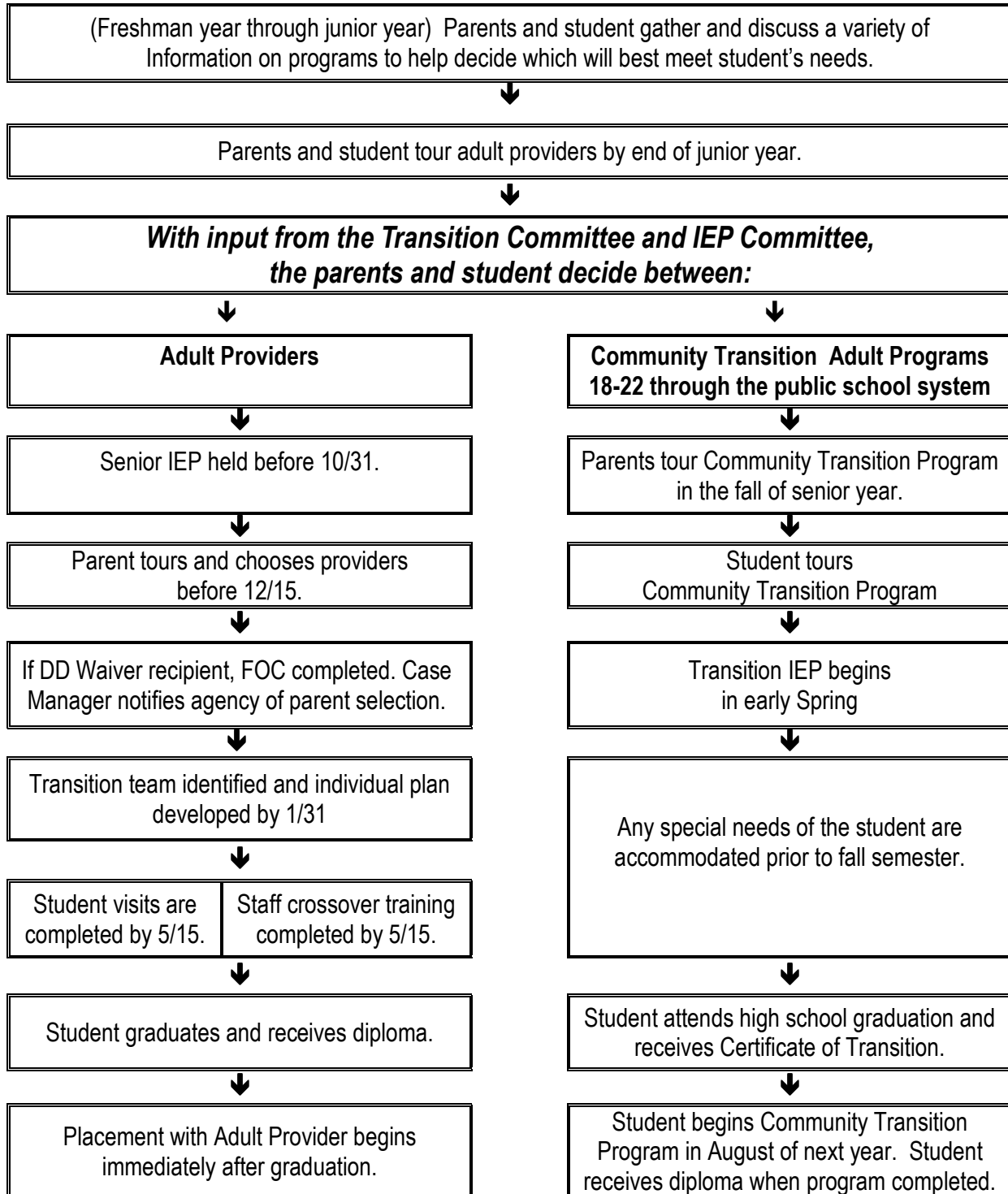
What might cause a student to not want to participate in the student-led IEP process?

Actually, there are a few reasons why a student might not want to lead or even participate in the IEP process. One is confidentiality. We need to look at ways to encourage students to begin to look their peers or others in the eye and really admit what is going on in their lives. This is a growing process. It needs to be planned and worked on over time. Another reason a student may be unwilling to participate in student-led IEPs may be the issue of "trust." The adult members of the IEP team (parents, educators, and others) must lay groundwork that builds trust. This, too, should be planned and worked on over time.

Values
Make Us Who We Are
and
Who We Become!

Transition to Post High School Placement

*This guide is designed for families of young adults on the Ability Path who will transition to an Adult Provider or Community Transition Adult Program. Families of students on the Ability Path who will transition to a vocational school or college should request a copy of **The Journey Continues** booklet.*



Transition Mapping -- A Team Effort

Goal	Responsible Party
8th Grade	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a transition statement (prior to age 14) • If you did not apply for the DD Waiver when your child was diagnosed, you should complete the application as soon as possible. The D.D. Waiver is the single most important resource for a child with significant disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEP Team/Trans Spec • Parent (School staff can assist.)
Freshman Year	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin use of a daily planner: This prepares students for carrying important information back and forth. Everyone uses a calendar. Others can document appointments, events, etc. for the student who has difficulty writing. • Attend transition open house or family night: Staff review their assigned responsibilities with families. This event is an opportunity to increase communication and build partnerships between home & school. • Attend the Adult Provider Fair: (voluntary) A variety of agencies participate and are ready to help you figure out the “system”. <u>It is never too soon to begin planning for “life after high school.”</u> • Complete D.D. Waiver Application if you have not already completed this process. School staff can assist you. • Apply for SSI (if eligible): If the student is a minor, the Social Worker will work with the family to determine if the student is eligible to apply. • Arrange for a Vocational Assessment: This assessment is part of the process to develop workable, realistic goals for the student. The family and teacher provide information. The Transition Specialist compiles a report focused on strengths, interests, and skill target areas to share with the parent. • Begin to work on Senior Portfolio: The teacher starts to gather materials and examples of the student’s work that showcase the student’s abilities and accomplishments during the student’s time in high school. • Begin Campus Familiarization: The school staff will acquaint the student with the high school campus to assess the degree of independence the student could manage at this point. • Begin Community Familiarization: Staff use community experiences to increase independence in communication and decision making. • Maintain IEP in the Parent Notebook: A notebook for parents should be distributed during the freshman IEP. Keep all your documents together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student, Parent, and Teacher • Student, Parent, and Staff • Student, Parent and Teacher • Parent • Parent and Social Worker • Transition Specialist • Transition Specialist and Sponsor Teacher • Sponsor teacher, Support Staff • Sponsor teacher, Support Staff • Parent
School year when student turns 16	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use daily planner. Planners can be adapted to meet the student’s needs. • Attend Transition Open House and Adult Provider Fair. • Review previous year’s milestones-complete as needed. • Obtain State Identification Card. • Develop attainable goals to include in the written Transition Plan. • Maintain IEP and Transition Outcome Plan (TOP) in parent Notebook. • Increase campus and community independence. • Apply for Transportation Certification (communities with public transport). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/Parent/Staff • Parent/Student/Staff • All • Student & Parent • IEP Committee • Parent • Sponsor Teacher • Parent, Teacher

Last year of High School (for student planning to enter Community Transition Adult Program provided by the public school system.) *** Indicates key activities when a student turns 18.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the daily planner as stated above. *** • Attend Family Night: *** Staff discuss their responsibilities with the family's activities that need to be completed by GRADUATION. • Attend the Adult Provider Fair: *** Families “check out” local services. Families not currently receiving waiver services will need to talk to agencies that have general fund slots that might be available. • Attend 18-year-old presentation. *** • Review previous year’s milestones and complete as needed. *** • Apply for SSI (if applicable). *** When the student turns 18, Social Worker will provide written and oral information to all families who are not receiving benefits at that time. • Obtain checking account (in student’s name). • Work to complete the Senior Portfolio. • Parents tour community providers during the first semester of their child’s senior year. Visit the agencies to determine the best match. • Develop a resume with student. The Sponsor Teacher works with the student to develop a printed resume to give to community programs. • Maintain IEP/Transition Outcome Plan (TOP) in parent notebook. *** • Tour Community Transition Program second semester. • Attend Senior Transition IEP in March. High School, the Community Transition staff, parents, and student develop the IEP for the Community Transition Program next year and address milestones yet to be completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/Parent/Staff • Student/Parent/Staff • Student/Parent • Parent/Soc. Worker • ALL • Parent, Student, and Social Worker • Parent, Soc. Worker • Teacher/ Staff • Parent/HS/CTAP • Sponsor Teacher, Parent, Student, Staff CTAP • Parent • All • All
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Last Year of High School (Student transitioning to Adult Providers in the community.) *** Indicates key activities when a student turns 18.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use daily planner. *** • Attend Transition Open House and Adult Provider Fair. *** • Attend Senior IEP: Prior to Oct. 31 a senior IEP must be held. Goals need to be established that can be accomplished by graduation. Community agencies should be invited. D.D. Waiver Case Managers should attend. • Review previous year’s milestones. Complete as needed. *** • Obtain checking account in student’s name. If applicable, apply for SSI. *** • Update Vocational Assessment Portfolio. *** • Student visits to community agencies (as needed). School staff, parents, and agency staff work to ensure a smooth transition to a new day program based on the needs of the young adult. Parents should see the programs FIRST. • Complete Freedom of Choice Form (if applicable). Families who are receiving D.D. Waiver services will need to complete a “FOC” to choose what agency you want to serve your young adult after high school (1st semester). • Develop a resume with student. • Maintain IEP and TOP in parent Notebook. • Visits / crossover training for exiting student (as needed). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/Parent/Staff • Student/Parent/Staff • Entire Team • ALL • Parent, Student, SW • Transition Specialist • Parent & Student (if practical & possible) • Parent, Case Mgr. • Sponsor Teacher • Parent • ALL
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After the Meeting

As soon as the plan has been developed, it is time to implement it. Collecting information on the progress being made is a key part of working with the plan. It is important to communicate with all of the IEP team members as you monitor your son's or daughter's progress. Keep a written log of telephone calls and face-to-face conversations. Your "communication log" should include the date, the name of the program, and the person contacted, in addition to a summary of the discussion. Keep copies of letters, notes, progress reports, IEPs, and relevant records.

The Transition Mapping information (pages 39-40) will help you remember just some of the details that are important for your young adult. It provides a guideline of activities that need to be done and when to do them. The IEP you helped to develop should provide a detailed timeline that spells out what is to be done and who is responsible. *As a member of the IEP team, it is also your responsibility to keep an eye on the timeline and help make sure that the plan is on track!* The IEP must be reviewed at least annually. If a review meeting is not held, do not hesitate to contact the school to schedule a meeting. Cooperate with school personnel in setting up a meeting of the team as soon as possible to reassess transition or any other areas of your young adult's IEP. Remember, an IEP meeting can be called anytime there is a concern.



Informal Steps to Effective Problem Solving

There may be times in your journey that you have a concern about services or progress toward goals. Ideally, we want to solve problems without destroying relationships. Informal ways of resolving conflict work best. Always begin at the lowest level in the chain of command. Begin at the school level then the district's Special Education Director before moving on to the Public Education Department. The same chain of command process should be followed if your concern is with a provider supervised by another agency. In some cases, you may want to request a student staffing to share your concern with the transition team and provide an opportunity for problem solving.

Remember that transition is a coordinated set of services and often involves individuals who do not see each other on a daily basis. As parents, we may prefer phone calls or informal visits to speak personally with those who are involved with the transition process. While this is a great link, it can also lead to frustration if the person is not immediately available and your efforts end up in a game of phone tag. Even when you are able to contact an individual by phone or in person, it is always best to follow-up with a written note or letter. Written communication keeps all parties in the loop.

If informal approaches have not been successful, you should request an IEP meeting. Ask for an IEP meeting if the agreed upon services are not being provided or when short-term objectives are not being met. Document your concerns in writing so that everyone on your young adult's transition team receives a consistent message. If there is strong disagreement among members of the team, you may request mediation or a facilitated IEP that is lead by a neutral party. The Public Education Department and school districts around New Mexico are now using this approach to resolve differences at the local level.

Parents Reaching Out outlines steps to both informal and formal methods of problem solving in our Handbook – Parental Rights and Special Education Procedures. If you need more information on these topics, please contact our office to receive your copy or check on dates for our next IEP Process workshop.



Related Topics

Parents face many decisions as their young adult prepares for life after high school. The picture is different for every family. Decisions are often more complex for families of youth with disabilities. Knowing what resources are available after high school and how to access them will help as you plan for transition to adulthood. Some benefits may already be in place and some may begin at age 18. Here are some things to consider in preparing your young adult for life after high school.

Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver

NM Department of Health - Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD)

The DD Waiver is a Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver which was created to serve children and adults in their homes and communities instead of institutions. It is a very important support service for individuals that have substantial functional limitations. Support includes Medicaid, respite, therapies, and many other services. In order to access all the benefits you may be entitled to, it is important that you take the following steps:

- Apply for the waiver as soon as your child is diagnosed. *Save a copy of your completed application in a secure place, such as a safe deposit box.* Parents Reaching Out has a handbook and fact sheet with information on how to apply.
- After the NM Department of Health - DDSD reviews your application; you will receive a Letter of Determination which will tell you if your child meets the criteria for a developmental disability. *Do not lose this letter. Save it in a secure place.* If the file is misplaced at the state agency, your copy will be the only proof of DD Waiver eligibility.
- If your child is determined to be eligible, his/her name will be placed on a waiting list also known as the Central Registry. During this waiting period, your family may be eligible to receive some respite services through State General Funds.

What will happen when your child's name comes off the DD Waiver waiting list?

1. You will receive a packet from the Metro Regional Office informing you that your child is being allocated for DD Waiver services. At the same time, you will receive a *Primary Freedom of Choice* form to select a case management agency. You are given **30 days** to return this form to the Metro Regional Office. Parents Reaching Out has an *Allocation Handbook* with more information on this process.
2. Part of the allocation process includes a second determination that your young adult's condition meets the definition of a developmental disability. Along with the *Primary Freedom of Choice* form, you should also receive an *Application/Redetermination of Eligibility for Medical Assistance of Aged, Blind, and Disabled Individual* form that you will need to fill out and return to the ISD office.
3. An ISP (Individualized Service Plan) meeting will be called by the Case Manager. It is similar to an IEP meeting, but much broader in scope. You will discuss your son's or daughter's accomplishments, likes, dislikes, and goals. Objectives will be written for a one year time period. The Case Manager can assist you with a current list of providers that you can contact for services.
4. If your son or daughter is still in high school, school staff should be invited to attend the ISP. Every effort should be made to coordinate IEP meetings with ISP meetings.

The DD Waiver provides the ONLY long term comprehensive vocational or day habilitation placements. Through the waiver, the student receives supervision and support at the level determined through a functional assessment. The agencies are paid varying rates dependent on the amounts and types of support the student needs. The waiting list for DD Waiver services contains over 5000 names, and services can take up to 12 years to start. Therefore, to ensure the availability of resources when the student graduates from high school, application needs to be made when the child is diagnosed. It is best to apply when a child is in elementary school, or middle school at the latest. Application can still be made when your son or daughter is in high school. However, the long waiting list may cause gaps in services and become a barrier to a smooth transition into the adult community. School districts can provide the necessary application information or you can contact the NM Dept. of Health – DDSD. For contact information, please check our Resource Directory on pages 59-60.

Types of DD Waiver Vocational Programs

A variety of programs can be accessed for individuals who are on the DD Waiver. Programs and services vary from community to community, so it is important to investigate what is available in your area. Bernalillo County has more vocational alternatives than anywhere else in the state.

- **Day Habilitation:** Persons who are unable to work often participate in some day habilitation program. These programs vary but, in general, they all provide the same services. All programs are capable of being a full day program, but can be shortened to meet the needs of the client and family. Some of them focus only on socialization, while other programs may combine a work component with community outings. With DD Waiver support, a “day hab” program can be tailored to meet the person’s individual preferences as well as his/her medical and behavioral needs.
- **Supportive Employment:** Again, the range of alternatives is impressive. Your son or daughter might work in a sheltered workshop setting or in an environment where 4 or 5 clients perform a job as a group. A job supervisor is provided by the vocational provider. *For example: A landscaping service that routinely performs the watering and upkeep of the plants in office buildings could provide a supported work environment for an individual who enjoys plants and nature.*

The Waiver standards provide the following information about Supported Employment:

The objective of Supported Employment services is to provide supports that achieve employment in jobs of the individual’s choice in his or her community, and which increase his or her economic independence, self-reliance, social connections, and ability to grow within a career.

All Supported Employment services are required to demonstrate: appropriately high expectations, enriched opportunities for learning, skill building, and the use of least restrictive environments. Supported Employment services shall be provided at the times and places as required by the individual’s employment up to 365 days a year.

Supported Employment Models

Self-Employment: Through a process of discovery, an individual may elect to start his/her own business.

Individual Supported Employment: Employment with supports in integrated work settings.

Group Supported Employment: More than one individual works in an integrated setting with staff supports on site. Regular and daily contact with non-disabled co-workers and/or the public occurs.

Intensive Supported Employment: Offers one-to-one job coaching for employed individuals in integrated community based settings. Intensive Supported Employment is intended for individuals who need 1:1 job support (face-to-face) 32 or more hours per month.

- **Competitive Employment:** A person could be competitively employed in various jobs in the city and have a job coach who provides a great deal of supervision in the beginning. Job coach support gradually fades out as the person learns the job and experiences success. *A person can go between these classifications (supported and competitive employment) depending on their skill level, social abilities, physical health, and behavior.*
- **Home Based Services:** If your son or daughter is 18 years of age or older and is currently receiving D.D. Waiver funding, this program will allow you to care for your child in your home setting. The Home Based Direct Support Provider may be a couple, an individual, paid roommates, friends, or natural family members. Payment is made to the person providing the support.

State General Funds

The state of New Mexico provides some job “slots” to five vocational providers in Albuquerque. They are limited in number, and the number of “slots” each agency has will vary from agency to agency. The state pays each agency monthly to provide supervision to an individual. Therefore, these agencies need to select people who have few or no medical or behavior needs.

Other NM Waiver Programs

PRO Note: If your child does not qualify for the DD waiver, he or she may still qualify for one of the other waivers available in New Mexico since each waiver has its own criteria for qualification. Following is a brief description of the other waiver programs.

The **Coordination of Long Term Services (CoLTS) “C” waiver (CCW)** helps New Mexicans who are elderly or have physical disabilities to live in their homes. To qualify for services, you or your loved one must: either be 65 years of age or older **or** have a disability; need help with personal care (bathing, dressing, eating); and be a resident of New Mexico. You would apply for the CCW through the Developmental Disabilities Support Division (DDSD) at 1-800-283-5548, 1-800-283-5548 or online at www.health.state.nm.us/ddsd

The **HIV/AIDS Waiver Program** helps New Mexicans with HIV/AIDS to live in their homes. To qualify for services, you or your loved one must have a diagnosis of HIV or AIDS. For more information call 505-476-3628.

The **Medically Fragile Waiver (MF Waiver)** helps New Mexicans with a developmental disability and a medically fragile condition to live in their home and community. To qualify for services, you or your loved one must: have a medically fragile condition that requires extensive medical treatment and daily skilled nursing care; be at risk for or have a developmental delay or disability that began before the age of twenty-two (22); need help with personal care such as bathing, dressing, or eating; and be a resident of New Mexico. For more information, contact the program in Albuquerque at 505-841-2913 or 1-800-283-8415. Visit their website at: www.health.state.nm.us/ddsd/medicallyfragilewaiver/programmfwaiwerpg5.htm

The **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) short term trust fund** program assists persons age 18 and older who have a traumatic brain injury. You may contact them by calling 1-866-451-2901 or by visiting their website at: www.nmaging.state.nm.us/TBI_Program.html

The **Mi Via Self-Directed Waiver** is a Medicaid self-directed waiver designed to assist persons with disabilities and families who choose to direct their own services and support in their homes and communities. To be eligible for Mi Via, the person applying must be a New Mexico resident who is already receiving waiver services *or* has received an allocation to one of the following four Medicaid waiver programs: CoLTS - CCW Waiver, DD Waiver, Medically Fragile Waiver, or the AIDS Waiver. Individuals with a traumatic brain injury are also eligible to participate in Mi Via. For more information, visit: www.MiViaNM.org

You may apply for more than one waiver.

However, you can only receive one waiver allocation.

We understand that this waiver process can seem overwhelming. The most important thing to remember, though, is to ***start early!*** There is help available, and PRO is here to support you in your efforts. For more information, or to request our waiver comparison brochure, *Know Your Options*, call us at 505-247-0192 or 1-800-524-5176 and ask to speak to a Family to Family Health Information Center liaison.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

There are some important changes that occur in Social Security benefits at age eighteen which will also affect Medicaid benefits. Individuals must go through a Continuing Disability Review (CDR) at age 17½ to determine eligibility. The individual will need to provide proof that he/she cannot be gainfully employed. For individuals that will require Social Security, all documentation of the inability to work should begin by age 16. The Social Security Administration website (www.ssa.gov) has more information..

Your son or daughter must be disabled or blind to be eligible for SSI. Children may be eligible for benefits depending upon the family's income and assets, but when they turn 18, the family income is no longer considered. However, the benefit will be denied if they have more than \$2,000 in resources. This includes liquid assets like savings, stocks, bonds, etc., and real property beyond one vehicle they use and the home in which they reside. The benefit or dollar amount may be reduced if the individual is 18 or older and lives in your home. You can, however, avoid the deduction if you charge your young adult rent. If your son or daughter is deemed eligible for SSI, he or she is automatically eligible for Medicaid. If you have private health insurance, your son or daughter can stay on your plan and still be covered through Medicaid.

Written applications for SSI are submitted at the nearest Social Security Administration (SSA) office. If you live in a metropolitan area, make an appointment to submit the application by calling their toll free number. This can reduce or eliminate a lengthy wait. Begin this process three to six months prior to your young adult's eighteenth birthday. The SSA office will also send the application so you can complete it before your appointment.

Bring the following to the application interview:

- Social Security card number
- An original document for proof of age (birth certificate is recommended)
- Evidence of citizenship or immigration status
- Records of earned and/or unearned income
- Auto registration
- Medical reports
- Physicians' names & addresses
- Therapists' names & addresses
- IEPs for the last two years
- Any testing results which will verify the individual's disability.

You may also want to have written statements from others who will verify that your son or daughter is unable to do things that same age peers can do for themselves. Benefits are paid back to the month of application so if you are missing some documentation, submit the application anyway. Provide SSA with the names and addresses of doctors, hospitals, or clinics where your child has received treatment.

For information or assistance call your local SSA office or their toll free number (1-800-772-1213). They can explain how to appeal a decision which denies eligibility. The Family Health and Information Center at Parents Reaching Out (PRO) can also help by answering your questions or providing information to assist you with this process (1-800-524-5176).

Whenever possible, SSI should be used as a stepping stone to economic self-sufficiency. The Social Security Administration has developed programs that encourage people with disabilities to achieve a more independent and satisfying lifestyle by taking advantage of employment opportunities. Call their toll-free number to request the "Red Book on Work Incentives" (SSA Publication 64-030).



Age of Majority

Reminder: According to the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) 6.31.2.13 K (1-2), at age 18 the student becomes an adult and parents are no longer required by law to give their consent for programs or services. At each annual IEP meeting for a student who is 14 or older, the school must inform parents of the rights that will transfer when their child turns 18. During discussions about the student's transition needs, the team should clearly identify areas where the student may or may not need additional support when he or she turns 18. If it is appropriate, parents' plans for obtaining guardianship should also be discussed at the IEP meeting.



Some young adults continue to receive special education services in the public schools through the age of 22. If this is the case for your family, be aware that all educational rights will still transfer to your child at age 18. New Mexico does **not** have a procedure in place to allow parents to represent the educational interests of their young adult when he or she turns 18. By law, your son or daughter will be responsible for making his or her own educational decisions. As an adult, he or she can decide to exclude you from participating in meetings and making decisions about adult services. Of course, you can still advise your child. Your son or daughter can invite you to IEP meetings. You can continue to support your young adult through this transition time. The school, however, only has a legal obligation to include your child, not you, in decisions and meetings. This change in roles underscores why it is so important for young adults to be active participants in developing their transition plans and IEPs.

Guardianship

If you have concerns about your young adult's ability to make educational, health, or independent living decisions, you may want to look into obtaining guardianship. *Parents do not automatically become their adult child's guardian.* If your young adult is not capable of making decisions about day-to-day needs, a parent, family member, or other concerned person must make a request to the Probate Court to be appointed as his/her legal guardian. The court will then appoint a Guardian Ad Litem to represent your son or daughter during the decision-making process. The Guardian Ad Litem is responsible for visiting the individual prior to the hearing and reviewing various reports. She/he will voice an opinion as to the appropriateness and suitability of the proposed guardianship and guardian. The guardian's role is determined by the court. There are different types of guardianships which are determined based on the person's ability to manage his or her needs. For example, if your young adult is able to make some, but not all decisions, you may want to request Limited Guardianship, rather than a Full Guardianship. Usually, the courts will want to assign the least restrictive type of guardianship. Depending on the individual's needs, the guardian may assume responsibility for:

- making daily living decisions for the individual;
- coordinating and monitoring professional and other services needed;
- making financial, legal, and medical decisions

The court will determine who is best qualified to serve as guardian. When guardianship is granted, the court will clearly define the powers of the guardian. This is a serious decision. You will need to consider not only your child's needs, but also your own. How will this decision affect your life? If you are unable to assume guardianship, another family member may be able to step into that role. *We recommend that you begin the process one year in advance of your*

child's eighteenth birthday because this can be an expensive process. This will allow time to save the money needed for this process. Funding may be available through the New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Planning Council's Office of Guardianship. The funding is based on the proposed guardian's financial status and the financial eligibility of your child for institutional Medicaid. There are waiting lists, so plan ahead so you will not be caught unprepared. You will want to make this contact a year in advance. The Office of Guardianship can also provide information and instructions for people who are seeking to become guardians. For more information, call 1-888-779-6183. For additional information on guardianship procedures, you may contact:

New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Planning Council – Office of Guardianship
810 W San Mateo Street – Suite C
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505-4144
Phone: 505-476-7332 or Toll Free: 1-888-779-6183
www.nmddpc.com

The New Mexico Guardianship Association (505-881-3338) is a non-profit organization that can help you prepare for and carry out your guardianship duties. They have a wonderful handbook, which will help you understand your new role and provide you with many resources. It is available on their website at guardianshipnm.org

Estate Planning

Making financial provisions for youth with disabilities is often a concern of parents. By careful planning, you can coordinate your resources with government benefit programs to ensure a comfortable lifestyle, both now and in the future, for your son or daughter. A team of professionals, including an attorney, accountant, financial planner, and an advocate can help develop and implement such a plan. Ask other parents in similar circumstances if they can offer recommendations. You want professionals who are experienced in estate planning for families who have a member with a disability. Do not be afraid to ask about the cost of services because this process is longer than simply preparing a will.



To protect any public assistance, do not name your child as an heir in your will or as a beneficiary of life insurance policies or IRAs. In some jurisdictions you must state clearly that it is your intent that your child will not receive an inheritance from you. If it is appropriate, discuss potential inheritances with grandparents or other relatives. In doing so, you can help them understand how to protect your son's or daughter's access to basic services.

You may choose to establish a *special needs trust*. This is a complicated document that must be drafted very carefully. You will need to provide funding for the *special needs trust* and identify trustees to administer the assets. Any trust funds must be spent for your child who was named as beneficiary of the trust. If the trust is not a special needs trust, it will count as an asset. Another way to provide is by making a specific gift to someone with an unofficial understanding that the proceeds will be used for your child. This is a risky option since there is no way to guarantee the gift will be used as you intended.

Resources



We have gathered several resources on the following pages to help you as you work with your son or daughter to take steps toward participating as an adult in the community. We've included checklists that will help you work with the school transition team and others to identify areas that require further training or special attention as you plan for the future. We have also identified resources in New Mexico that can provide information or assistance with transition. One of the ways you can let others know about your ideas or concerns for your young adult's future is by letter writing, so we will begin with a few tips about this important tool.

Communicating Through Letter Writing

Letters provide a record of ideas, concerns, and suggestions. They are useful ways to document specific questions you may have about your child's education or to request information. They can also be used to give positive feedback to a staff member who has gone the extra mile to support your child. Letter writing is a skill. Each letter will differ according to the situation, the person you are writing to, and the issues you are discussing. We've included a few tips and a sample letter.

Letter Writing Tips

- Be sure to put a date on your letters.
- Give your child's full name and current class placement.
- Provide your full name, address, and a phone number where you can be reached.
- State your question, concern, or suggestion in specific terms.
- Let the person know what type of response you want (meeting, phone call, letter).
- Give the person a timeline for response.

<p>Your Name Street Address, City, State, Zip Daytime Phone Number</p>
<p>Today's Date (month, day, year)</p>
<p>Full Name of Person to whom you're writing (and their title) School (Agency or Organization) Street Address City, State, Zip Code</p>
<p>Dear _____ ,</p> <p>In this paragraph explain who you are, your child's name, and current placement. Briefly explain why you are writing the letter. <i>(Example: I am concerned that my son's current IEP and Transition Plan do not reflect the areas of need to transition into a Community Transition Program. I would like to consider this option to help him succeed as an adult.)</i></p> <p>In this paragraph explain what you would like to have happen or what you want changed. <i>(Example: I would like to call an IEP to address my concerns with the team and develop more appropriate goals towards my son's future.)</i></p> <p>Please call me by _____ at (phone number) to set up a meeting so we can discuss this in detail. I would like _____ to attend the meeting, if possible. Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Cc: (Send copies to others you feel appropriate.)</p>

Employment Traits Assessment

We recommend that parents work with their son or daughter to complete this checklist of traits that employers look for in employees. The results will help target skills for training.

	Needs Training	Needs Support	Does Now
Punctuality			
Is ready for school on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shows up at expected time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dependability			
Calls if late or absent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rarely or never absent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect for Self and Others			
Tells the truth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respects others' belongings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accepts constructive criticism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Takes Pride in Work			
Does careful and accurate work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attempts to correct mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Takes initiative to do new duties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appearance			
Good personal hygiene	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wears appropriate clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication			
Able to follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asks appropriate questions at appropriate times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interpersonal Skills			
Works well with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has appropriate social behaviors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to handle peer pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of Transportation			
Able to get to work area from drop-off point	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to get to pick-up point from work area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexibility			
Adjusts to changes in assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to learn new, related tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job Productivity			
Handles equipment and supplies carefully	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knows and follows the rules of the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stays on task	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Works at adequate speed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has adequate endurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



www.hrtw.org

Life Span Skills for Health: Transition Basics

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for Changing Roles

- For Families

Health & Wellness 101 The Basics	Yes, my child/ youth can do this	I want my child/ youth to do this	I need to learn how to teach my child/ youth	Someone else will have to do this for my child/youth Who?
1. My child/youth understands his/her health care need/disability, and can explain needs to others.				
2. My child/youth can explain to others how our family's customs and beliefs might affect health care decisions and medical treatments.				
3. My child/youth carries his/her health insurance card with him/her.				
4. My child/youth knows his/her health and wellness baseline (pulse, respiration rate, elimination habits).				
5. My child/youth tracks appointments and prescription refills expiration dates.				
6. My child/youth call to make his/her own doctor appointments.				
7. My child/youth calls in his/her prescriptions refills.				
8. Before a doctor's appointment my child/youth prepares written questions to ask.				
9. My child/youth is prepared to see the doctor by him/her self.				
10. My child/youth carries his/her important health information everyday (i.e.: medical summary, including medical diagnosis, list of medications, allergy info., doctor's / drug store numbers, etc.).				
11. My child/youth helps file medical records and receipts at home.				
12. My child/youth pays co-pays for his/her medical visits.				
13. My child/youth co-signs the "permission for medical treatment form" (with or without signature stamp, or can direct others to do so).				
14. My child/youth knows his/her symptoms that need quick medical attention.				
15. My child/youth knows what to do if he/she has a medical emergency.				
16. My child/youth knows how to monitor medical equipment so it's in good working condition (daily and routine maintenance).				
17. My child/youth and I have discussed a plan to be able to continue healthcare insurance after they turn 18.				

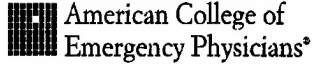


www.hrtw.org

Life Span Skills for Health: Transition Basics
 Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for Changing Roles
- For Youth

Health & Wellness 101 The Basics	Yes I do this	I want to do this	I need to learn how	Someone else will have to do this - Who?
1. I understand my health care needs, and disability and can explain my needs to others.				
2. I can explain to others how our family's customs and beliefs might affect health care decisions and medical treatments.				
3. I carry my health insurance card everyday				
4. I know my health and wellness baseline (pulse, respiration rate, elimination habits).				
5. I track my own appointments and prescription refills expiration dates.				
6. I call for my own doctor appointments.				
7. I call in my own prescription refills.				
8. Before a doctor's appointment I prepare written questions to ask.				
9. I know I have an option to see my doctor by myself.				
10. I carry my important health information with me everyday (i.e.: medical summary, including medical diagnosis, list of medications, allergy info., doctor's numbers, drug store number, etc.).				
11. I have a part in filing my medical records and receipts at home.				
12. I pay my co-pays for medical visits.				
13. I co-sign the "permission for medical treatment" form (with or without signature stamp, or can direct others to do so).				
14. I know my symptoms that need quick medical attention.				
15. I know what to do in case I have a medical emergency.				
16. I help monitor my medical equipment so it's in good working condition (daily and routine maintenance).				
17. My family and I have a plan so I can keep my healthcare insurance after I turn 18.				

Emergency Information Form for Children With Special Needs



American Academy
of Pediatrics



Date form
completed
By Whom

Revised
Revised

Initials
Initials

Name:		Birth date:	Nickname:
Home Address:		Home/Work Phone:	
Parent/Guardian:	Emergency Contact Names & Relationship:		
Signature/Consent*:			
Primary Language:	Phone Number(s):		
Physicians:			
Primary care physician:	Emergency Phone:		
	Fax:		
Current Specialty physician:	Emergency Phone:		
Specialty:	Fax:		
Current Specialty physician:	Emergency Phone:		
Specialty:	Fax:		
Anticipated Primary ED:	Pharmacy:		
Anticipated Tertiary Care Center:			

Diagnoses/Past Procedures/Physical Exam:	
1.	Baseline physical findings:
2.	
3.	Baseline vital signs:
4.	
Synopsis:	Baseline neurological status:

*Consent for release of this form to health care providers

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Diagnoses/Past Procedures/Physical Exam continued:	
Medications:	Significant baseline ancillary findings (lab, x-ray, ECG):
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	Prostheses/Appliances/Advanced Technology Devices:
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____

Management Data:	
Allergies: Medications/Foods to be avoided	and why:
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
Procedures to be avoided	and why:
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

Immunizations (mm/yy)											
Dates						Dates					
DPT						Hep B					
OPV						Varicella					
MMR						TB status					
HIB						Other					

Antibiotic prophylaxis:

Indication:

Medication and dose:

Common Presenting Problems/Findings With Specific Suggested Managements		
Problem	Suggested Diagnostic Studies	Treatment Considerations

Comments on child, family, or other specific medical issues:	
Physician/Provider Signature:	Print Name:

New Mexico Resource Directory

Resource Name	Phone #	Description
Arc of New Mexico 3655 Carlisle NE Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-883-4630 1-800-358-6493	Advocacy for individuals with disabilities
Brain Injury Association of NM, Inc. 121 Cardenas NE Albuquerque, NM 87108	888-292-7414	Information and support for people who have suffered a traumatic brain injury
Carrie Tingley Hospital – Inpatient 2211 Lomas Blvd. NE Albuquerque, NM 87131	505-272-2800	Pediatric orthopedic rehabilitation hospital
Carrie Tingley Hospital - Outpatient 1127 University NE Albuquerque, NM 87102	505-272-5200 1-800-472-3235	Pediatric orthopedic rehabilitation hospital. Cerebral Palsy Parent Assoc. meets on a regular basis. Call: 505-272-5296 or 1-800-472-3235.
Center for Development and Disability UNM Health Sciences Program 2300 Menaul Blvd. NE Albuquerque, NM 87107	1-505-272-3000 1-800-827-6380	Information and referral based on needs of individual
Community Options 2720 San Pedro NE Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-265-7936	Job development & job placement for people high school age or older who have a documented disability and need assistance finding work
Disability Advocacy Clinic 1330 San Pedro Dr. NE Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-255-5770	Information and advocacy for people trying to acquire SSI
Disability Rights New Mexico (formerly Protection and Advocacy) 1720 Louisiana Blvd. NE Suite 204 Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-256-3100 1-800-432-4682	Information, training, and legal advocacy for people with disabilities
Easter Seals 2041 S. Pacheco St. Suite 100 Santa Fe, NM 87505	505-424-7700 1-800-279-5261	Transportation to sheltered employment and other services for people with disabilities
Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC) 4401-B Lomas NE Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-266-5022 505-266-5022 TTY	Provides independent living services (advocacy, info, referral, skills training) to people with disabilities
Muscular Dystrophy Association 6733 Academy NE Suite D1 Albuquerque, NM 87109	505-828-1331	Information, referral and support for people with muscular dystrophy
Native American Protection & Advocacy (NAPAP) 3535 E. 30 th St. , Suite 201 Farmington, NM 87042	505-566-5880 505-786-5220 (Crownpoint)	Information about services to persons with disabilities and their rights. Training, legal representation, and system advocacy
National Alliance on Mental Illness - NM 6001 Marble NE Suite 8 Albuquerque, NM 87109-3086	505-260-0154	Information, support and advocacy for people with mental illness
New Mexico Autism Society P.O. Box 30955 Albuquerque, NM 87190	505-332-0306	Advocacy, information, and referral for people with autism
New Mexico Commission for the Blind 2200 Yale SE Albuquerque, NM 87106	505-841-8844 1-888-513-7958	Services for the blind/visually impaired

Resource Name	Phone #	Description
New Mexico Family Network (Formerly –PBDC) 1101 Cardenas Dr. NE Suite 202 Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-265-0430 1-800-273-7232	Support and advocacy for children with behavior difficulties
New Mexico Job Corp 1500 Indian School Rd. NW Albuquerque, NM 87104	1-800-992-2992 505-243-0299	Provides people 16-24 opportunity to prepare for employment (vocational, academic & GED)
New Mexico Relay Network	505-889-0420 1-800-659-8331	Telephone relay network 1-800-659-1779 TTY
NM Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing PO Box 5138 Santa Fe, NM 87502	505-881-8824 (Voice/TTY/VP)	Interpreting and referral services for eligible clients
NM Department of Education Special Ed. Unit 120 South Federal Place Room 206 Santa Fe, NM 87501-2786	505-827-1457	Monitors special education in NM and provides a variety of services to clients
NM Department of Workforce Solutions 401 Broadway NE Albuquerque, NM 87102	505-841-9300	Job referrals and work related resources for people seeking a job
NM Dept. of Health –Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) 810 San Mateo PO Box 26110 Santa Fe, NM 87502-6110	505-476-8973 1-877-696-1472	Full array of services dependent on Medicaid funding and eligibility Coordinates DD Waiver services. Answer questions/services related to Developmental Disabilities.
NM Developmental Disabilities Planning Council 810 West San Mateo Suite C Santa Fe, NM 87505	505-476-7321 1-888-779-6183	Advocacy, Capacity Building, Systemic Change
NM Division of Vocational Rehabilitation DVR 5301 Central NE Suite 1600 Albuquerque, NM 87108	505-841-5600 1-800-432-5868	Services to people with a documented disability who need assistance to prepare for, enter or retain employment
NM Technology Assistance Program 435 St. Michael's Drive Bldg. D Santa Fe, NM 87505	1-800-866-2253	Assists with the technology needs of people with disabilities
Parents Reaching Out - PRO 1920 "B" Columbia SE Albuquerque, NM 87106	505-247-0192 1-800-524-5176	Support, advocacy, education, and info. for parents of children with disabilities
Social Security Administration 1) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) 2) Social Security Disability Insurance 4300 Cutler NE Albuquerque, NM 87110	1-800-772-1213 1-800-325-0778 TTY	1) Aid for people with low income whose disability affects ability to work 2) Aid for people with a disability: based on prior work income
Southwest Center for Special Needs Planning 6301 Indian School Rd. NE Suite 500 Albuquerque, NM 87110	505-880-1355	Financial and lifetime planning for people with special needs
Transition Services (APS) Adult Centered Community Education and Support Services (ACCESS)	505-872-6800 x66818	APS program - young adults 18-21 with moderate to severe disabilities (work, daily living, community involvement)
Youth Development Inc. (YDI) 6306 Central SW Albuquerque, NM 87105	505-831-6038	Services that promote healthy behavior, development, and relationships in youth

National Resource Directory

Academy for Educational Development

1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009
Phone: 202-884-8000
Web site: <http://www.aed.org>

Family Voices Inc.

2340 Alamo SE, Suite 102
Albuquerque, NM 87106
Phone: 888-835-5669 or 505-872-4774
kidshealth@familyvoices.org
<http://www.familyvoices.org/>

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

West Virginia University
809 Allen Hall
Morgantown, WV 26506
Phone: 304-293-7186 or 1-800-526-7234

Job Opportunities for the Blind (JOB)

National Federation of the Blind

1800 Johnson Street
Baltimore, MD 21230
Phone: 410-659-9314 or 1-800-638-7518
Fax: 410-685-5653

National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (NAPAS)

900 Second Street, NE, Suite 211
Washington, DC 20002
202-408-9514 or 202-408-9521 (TTY)

National Center for Disability Services

201 IU Willets Road
Albertson, NY 11507
Phone: 516-747-5400 or 516-747-5355 (TT)

National Clearinghouse for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)

1825 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20009
Phone: (800) 695-0285 or (202) 884-8200

National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)

1710 Rhode Island Ave., Northwest
Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-207-0334; 877-525-3400

National Easter Seals Society

233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60606
Phone: 312-726-6200 or 312-726-4258(TTY)

National Organization on Disability

888 16th Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202-293-7999 or 202-293-5968 (TTY)

National Rehabilitation Association

633 South Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-836-0850 or 888-258-4295

National School-to-Work Opportunities Office

400 Virginia Avenue, SW, Rm. 210
Washington, D.C. 20021
Phone: 202-401-6222
<http://www.stw.ed.gov/>

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition Institute on Community Integration (UAP)

University of Minnesota 6 Pattee Hall,
150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 624-2097 <http://ici.umn.edu/ncset/>

National Transition Network

430 Wulling Hall 86 Pleasant Street, SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Phone: 612-624-1062
<http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn>

Social Security Administration (SSA)

US Department of Health and Human Services

Phone: 1-800-772-1213 or 1-800-352-0778 (TT)
<http://www.ssa.gov/reach.htm>

The Council for Exceptional Children

1110 North Glebe Road Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-5704
Phone: 1-888-232-7733 or 866-915-5000 (TTY)
<http://www.cec.sped.org/>

Resource Connections

New Mexico Public Education Department, <http://www.ped.state.nm.us>

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, <http://www.dvrgetsjobs.com>

New Mexico Youth in Transition, <http://www.nmtransition.org/>

US Department of Education, <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html>

Beach Center on Families and Disability, <http://www.beachcenter.org/>

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, <http://cecp.air.org/>

Council for Exceptional Children, <http://www.cec.sped.org/>

Family and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE), <http://www.fape.org/>

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, <http://www.nichey.org/>

Pacer Center, Inc., <http://www.pacer.org/>

Special Needs, Special Gifts, <http://www.specialneedsadvocate.com/>

Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers (Alliance), <http://www.taalliance.org>

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New Mexico Department of Education Special Education Division
Utah Parent Center

We are grateful for the families of children with disabilities and their quest for the best for their child. We applaud their efforts and encourage them to keep asking questions and sharing their stories so that others may learn.

Parents Reaching Out

Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family

As a statewide non-profit organization, we connect with parents, caregivers, educators, and other professionals to promote healthy, positive, and caring experiences for New Mexico families and children. We have served New Mexico families for over twenty-five years. Our staff and Family Leadership Action Network volunteers reflect the unique diversity of the communities throughout our state.

Children do not come with instructions on how to deal with the difficult circumstances that many families experience. Parents Reaching Out believes that families' needs go beyond the bounds of formal services. *What we can offer to each other is uniquely ours. We have all been there.*

Our Mission

The mission of Parents Reaching Out is to enhance positive outcomes for families and children in New Mexico through informed decision making, advocacy, education, and resources. Parents Reaching Out provides the networking opportunities for families to connect with and support each other. This mission supports *all families* including those who have children with disabilities, and others who are disenfranchised. Parents Reaching Out achieves this by:

- ♦ Developing family leadership
- ♦ Connecting families to each other
- ♦ Building collaborative partnerships
- ♦ Providing families knowledge and tools to enhance their power

Our Beliefs

- ♦ Families need support wherever they are in their journey.
- ♦ All families care deeply about their children.
- ♦ Families may need tools and support to accomplish their dreams.
- ♦ All families are capable of making informed decisions that are right for their family.
- ♦ Families in the state benefit from our organization having the staff and materials that meet their diversity.
- ♦ Systems that listen carefully to the family perspective improve outcomes for our children.

We invite all families and those serving families and children in New Mexico to make *Parents Reaching Out your one stop resource for a stronger family.* Our publications, workshops, and Resource Center offer tools for informed decision making and building partnerships in communities. Our trained staff and network of volunteers are here to serve you.

Parents Reaching Out is the home of:

NM Parent Information and Resource Center (NMPIRC)

NM Parent Training and Information Center (NMPTIC)

NM Family to Family Health Information Center (NMF2FHIC)

Parents Reaching Out

1920 B Columbia Drive, SE

Albuquerque, NM 87106

1-505-247-0192 ♦ 1-800-524-5176

www.parentsreachingout.org

From I-25—take the Gibson Blvd Exit 222 and go East on Gibson. Turn left at the third stop light (Girard). Turn left on Vail. Go one block to Columbia. Turn left on Columbia. Parents Reaching Out is on the east side of the street. Welcome!

