


A transition timeline for parents.

 **SSD TRANSITION
GUIDEBOOK**

toward successful **transition**

a checklist for the first 21 years



Written by Margaret Lewis and Jean Brokaw, each the parent of a young adult with a developmental disability.

Revised 2014

To Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities . . .

It is our hope that as parents you will always consider yourselves the experts on your child. We hope that as you seek information, help and guidance you will see your child in “people first” terms — initially as a baby to love and nurture, then as a child to raise for as independent a life as he or she can attain. Whatever the disability involved, remember it is only a part of your child’s individuality. Build on his or her strengths. High expectations are a keynote in a family’s daring to act bravely and creatively.

You may want to review these recommendations periodically, and add to or revise them to fit your specific circumstances.

You may copy this booklet freely and without restriction.

First published 1997; revised 2012.

Ten Steps to Independence: Promoting Self-Determination in the Home

Step 1. Walk the tightrope between protection and independence. Allow your son or daughter to explore his or her world.

Step 2. Children need to learn that what they say or do is important and can have influence on others. This involves allowing risk-taking and exploration.

Step 3. Self-worth and self-confidence are critical factors in the development of self-determination. Model your own sense of positive self-esteem for your child.

Step 4. Don’t run away from questions from your child about differences related

to their disabilities. Stress that every one is an individual, encourage your child’s unique abilities and help him or her accept unavoidable limitations.

Step 5. Recognize the process of setting goals. Don’t just emphasize outcomes.

Step 6. Schedule opportunities for interactions with children of different ages and backgrounds.

Step 7. Set realistic but ambitious expectations.

Step 8. Allow your child to take responsibility for his or her own actions, both the successes and the failures.

Step 9. Don’t leave choice-making opportunities to chance. Find opportunities to develop self-determination.

Step 10. Provide honest, positive feedback. Focus on the behavior or task that needs to be changed.

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I. WHATEVER YOUR CHILD'S AGE:

Join a family support group

An invaluable network and source for information and ideas. Talk with other families who have a child with a disability, including those with a child older than yours, as they may have had experiences from which you could benefit. The following organizations have support groups or can assist you to find the support you need.

Resources:

- **NAMI St. Louis**
(National Alliance for Mental Illness)
www.namistl.org
314-962-4670
- **Down Syndrome Association of Greater St. Louis**
www.dsagsl.org/
314-961-2504
- **Epworth's Family Support Network**
www.epworth.org/programs-family-support-network.php
314-918-3301
- **MO-FEAT (Missouri Families for Effective Autism Treatment)**
www.mo-feat.org
636-527-FEAT (3328)
- **MPACT (Missouri Parents Act)**
www.ptimpact.org
800-743-7634
- **Sharing Our Strengths / Missouri Developmental Disabilities Resource Center**
www.sharingourstrengths.com/
800-444-0821
- **SSD Parent Education and Diversity Awareness / Family & Community Resource Center**
www.ssdmo.org
314-989-8460
- **St. Louis Learning Disability Association (LDA)**
www.ldastl.org/
314-966-3088
- **St. Louis Arc**
www.slarc.org/
314-569-2211

Contact your Regional Office

to determine your child's eligibility for services as soon as your child has been identified as "at risk" for having a disability. Regional Office is a state-funded agency that will coordinate services that your child and you might need. Registration can be a lengthy process. Once registered, it is important to keep in touch with your service coordinator to keep your case active.

Resources:

- **Regional Office / Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities / Department of Mental Health**
<http://dmh.mo.gov>
St. Louis County Office
9900 Page
St. Louis, MO 63132
314-877-2711
Fax: 314-877-5606
St. Louis County Satellite Office
4040 Seven Hills Drive
Florissant, MO 63033
314-877-3400
Fax: 314-877-3111
- **St. Charles County, Jefferson County and St. Louis City residents contact:**
314-244-8800 / 800-358-7665
Fax: 314-244-8804

Ask for the Intake Department. A family member (not a professional) must make the call. Regional Office will also accept a note requesting an application to receive services. Be sure to include:

- ✓ Your child's name and address
 - ✓ Your child's Social Security number
 - ✓ Your child's Medicaid number (if any)
 - ✓ Names of doctors, hospitals or clinics that have seen your child
 - ✓ The last school your child has attended
 - ✓ Any vocational training received
 - ✓ Whether your child receives SSI
 - ✓ Whether or not you can be reached by phone
- **City residents: Contact Project Casefind through the St. Louis Office for Developmental Disability Resources** for help with the application process.
314-421-0090

Get medical and educational evaluations. They are important to identify your child's strengths and needs.

Begin therapy/intervention at the earliest age possible.

Resources:

- **Missouri First Steps Program**
Early intervention services for infants and toddlers, birth to age 3, who have delayed development
St. Louis County
314-453-9203 Fax: 314-453-0802
St. Charles County, St. Louis City
314-453-9203 Fax: 314-453-0802
<http://dese.mo.gov/se/fs/>

Explore school options — both public and private. Examine possibilities of inclusive education.

Resources:

- **County residents:** Contact your local school district when your child is 2 years, 9 months old for a free evaluation. Your child must be referred from your local school district to Special School District of St. Louis County. SSD provides early childhood special education services in 15 of the 22 public school districts in St. Louis County – 7 of the local districts have their own Early Childhood programs.
- **City residents:** Contact the Office of Special Education when your child is 2 years, 6 months old to set up an appointment for an evaluation.
Call 314-454-0010.
- **Contact your Regional Office service coordinator** to learn about and discuss the various options.
City: 314-421-0190
County: 314-877-2711 or 314-877-3111
St. Charles County: 636-926-1200

Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

There are income and eligibility requirements, but it may be worthwhile to apply. Under age 18, the child's eligibility is based on the parents' income, over age 18, self-eligibility.

Resources:

- **Social Security Administration**
www.ssa.gov
800-772-1213
Or, go to <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp> to search for an office by ZIP code.
The SSA Red Book serves as a general reference source about the employment-related provisions of Social Security Disability Insurance and the Supplemental Security Income Programs for educators,

advocates, rehabilitation professionals, and counselors who serve people with disabilities. <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/>

Take your child out into the

community — restaurants, shopping, errands, entertainment, playgrounds, library, church and vacations. This is an excellent way for your child to learn appropriate behavior and just to have fun.

Resources:

- **Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis**
www.recreationcouncil.org/
314-726-6044
The Recreation Council serves as a “clearinghouse” for information on leisure, recreation and socialization opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities who reside in the Greater St. Louis Area. The council works to ensure individuals are aware of and have access to activities and programs of their choice.

Talk to your child about various jobs in the community.

Have him or her participate in community-based instruction.

Encourage your child to make choices and decisions.

Encourage your child to volunteer in their community.

Attend workshops on assertiveness and advocacy training.

Parents generally are their child’s best advocate. There are advocacy agencies in the community available to help you with a particular challenges.

Resources:

- **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)**
www.dese.mo.gov

- **MPACT (Missouri Parents Act)**
www.ptimpact.org
800-743-7634
- **Legal Services of Eastern Missouri**
www.lsem.org
314-534-4200
- **Missouri Partners in Policymaking**
www.mpcdd.com/page.php?contentID=52
800-500-7878
- **Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services (MO P&A)**
MO P&A is the only legal rights organization in Missouri exclusively for people with disabilities. MO P&A provides nine federally funded programs to protect the legal rights of persons with disabilities. Due to limited funding in each program, the protection and advocacy system establishes specific service priorities and objectives on an annual basis
www.moadvocacy.org
800-392-8667
- **Office for Civil Rights (OCR)**
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/about/rgn-hqaddresses.html>
- **Paraquad**
Center for Independent Living, advocacy for housing and disability policy, youth group
www.paraquad.org/
314-289-4200
- **Special School District of St. Louis County Parent Education & Diversity Awareness**
Information on current seminars, workshops, conferences and upcoming events.
www.ssdmo.org
314-989-8108 or 314-989-8460

Get on mailing lists of organizations for persons with disabilities.

Resources (Missouri):

- **MPACT (Missouri Parents Act)**
www.ptimpact.org
800-743-7634
Parent training and information center assists parents to effectively advocate for their child's educational rights and services.
- **St. Louis Arc**
www.slarc.org/
314-569-2211
Provides support and services to children and adults with developmental disabilities.
- **Easter Seals Midwest/Life Skills (formerly TouchPoint/Life Skills)**
www.lifeskills-stl.org
314-567-7705
Serves persons with developmental disabilities with the major focus on adults.
- **Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis**
www.recreationcouncil.org/
314-726-6044 County residents
314-772-2299 City residents
Free quarterly newsletters; Summer Opportunities Guide.
- **College for Living (now called Continuing Education through Paraquad)**
http://www.paraquad.org/paraquad-services-focus-independent-living/disability-education-services
Provides training and skill development in advocacy and independent living skills
- **APSE-MO (Missouri Chapter of the Association for Persons in Supported Employment)**
www.apse.mo
Employment Training Collaborative Center for the Study of Disability, Education and Culture.

- **St. Louis Office for Developmental Disability Resources**
Service Coordination also available
314-421-0090
https://www.stlidd.org/
- **Governor's Council on Disability**
http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/
800-877-8249
- **Missouri Developmental Disabilities Resource Center**
www.moddrc.org
800-444-0821
- **Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council**
http://www.moddcouncil.org/

Resource (Out-of-State):

- **Transition Coalition**
http://transitioncoalition.org/transition/
- **Institute for Community Inclusion**
http://www.communityinclusion.org/
- **National Center on Secondary Education and Transition**
http://www.ncset.org/

Become familiar with your local libraries.

Resources:

- **St. Louis County Library Headquarters Branch**
1640 South Lindbergh Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63131
314-994-3300
www.slcl.org/
Books, periodicals and videos for families of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- **St. Louis City Public Library**
www.slpl.org
314-241-2288

- **Family & Community Resource Center/
Special School District of St. Louis County**
12110 Clayton Road
St. Louis, MO 63131
www.ssdmo.org/cool_tools/fcrc.html
314-989-8460
Books, videos, awareness materials,
newsletters, and pamphlets.
- **St. Louis Children’s Hospital Family
Resource Center**
[www.stlouischildrens.org/content/
familyresourcecenter.htm](http://www.stlouischildrens.org/content/familyresourcecenter.htm)
314-454-2350

Subscribe to publications. There are a number of publications focusing on specific disabilities.

Resources:

- **ADDitude – Living Well with
Attention Deficit**
www.additudemag.com
- **Autism Asperger’s Digest**
<http://autismdigest.com/>
- **Autism Spectrum Quarterly**
www.asquarterly.com/
- **Exceptional Parent**
www.eparent.com/
877-372-7368 (Toll Free)
- **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
Parent Division**
www.cec.sped.org
703-620-3660
- **Mainstream Magazine**
www.mainstream-mag.com/
- **Parenting Special Needs**
[http://parentingspecialneeds.org/
currentissue](http://parentingspecialneeds.org/currentissue)
- **The Special Ed Advocate
from Wrightslaw**
www.wrightslaw.com/subscribe.htm

Access respite care. A generous number of respite care hours are free to city and county residents, regardless of income. Respite care services are available in your home, in the provider’s home, in residential centers, or in daytime centers.

Resources:

- **St. Louis Family Support
& Respite Coalition**
Free pamphlet listing the various agencies that provide respite care 314-817-2270 (St. Louis Arc ARCH office)
- **County Residents:** Call your Regional Office case manager for referrals; or, if you don’t have a case manager yet, call the St. Louis Regional Office at 314-877-2711 and ask for intake.
- **City Residents:** You are expected to have a Regional Office case manager in order to access respite care. If you don’t have a case manager and need crisis intervention or general information, call the St. Louis Office for Developmental Disability Resources at 314-421-0090.

Attend workshops on IEP planning.

Resources:

- **Special School District of St. Louis
County**
www.ssdmo.org/cool_tools/workshops.html
314-989-8108 or 314-989-8438 or 314-
989-8194
- **MPACT (Missouri Parents Act)**
<http://ptimpact.org/Training/Training.aspx>
800-743-7634
- **St. Louis City Public Schools**
Contact your school counselor or resource teacher at your local school for workshop offerings and resource directory.

- **Office of Developmental Disabilities**
Resources Education Advocate
314-421-0090

Ask for Education Coach

Go to your child’s IEP with your own specific goals tailored to his/her needs. Invite knowledgeable, supportive advocates, such as your Regional Office case manager, parent advocate, family, friend, or student peer who is non-disabled.

Begin estate planning. Keep your will/trust up-to-date. Keep current with related federal and state legislation. Be certain your attorney is aware of current legal precedents impacting persons with disabilities (e.g., Tidrow trust). Do some good basic reading on estate planning prior to visiting your lawyer.

Resources:

- **Midwest Special Needs Trust**
www.midwestspecialneedstrust.org
573-256-5055 or 877-239-8055
mftbt@midwestspecialneedstrust.org
- **Funding a special needs trust:**
<http://www.pacer.org/publications/possibilities/saving-for-your-childs-future-needs-part1.html>

Help your child explore self-advocacy skills - to learn to speak for him- or herself in school and in the community, make decisions and solve problems. It is important to help your child understand his or her strengths and needs and to be able to express them to others. Students at an early age can attend a part of their IEP and have input into the plan, which will help give them gain self-confidence. See “III. At Age 14 to 16” below for specific self-advocacy activities for your child when he or she is a little older.

Encourage your child to utilize assistive technology - (computers, cell phone, pager, communication devices, car modifications, etc.).

Resources:

- **Missouri Assistive Technology**
www.at.mo.gov
816-655-6700
or 800-647-8557 (in state only)
- **The Enabling Mobility Center**
<https://enablemob.wustl.edu/EMC/emc.htm>
314-289-4202
- **Local School Districts**
Your school district has certain obligations under federal law to provide assistive technology for your child when needed to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Each decision must be made on a case-by-case basis based on the educational needs of your child. If your child’s Individual Education Program (IEP) team determines that he or she needs some type of assistive technology in order to receive FAPE, the child’s IEP must contain a specific statement of such services.

Encourage and reinforce your child’s friendships and social networks.

Explore weekend and summer activities to promote independence; camp can be a valuable experience. Foster good general health and physical activity, which develop stamina for the extended work world.

For all three of the above recommendations, contact the Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis and request a copy of their free “Guide to Leisure Services,” which gives a comprehensive, descriptive listing of recreation activities in the St. Louis area. Services listed comprise both those

specifically designed for people with disabilities, as well as programs for the general public that include people with disabilities.

Resources:

- **Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis**
www.recreationcouncil.org/
County Residents and TDD users:
314-726-6044
City Residents: 314-772-2299
- **SSD Parent Education Workshops**
http://www.ssdmo.org/cool_tools/workshops.html
314-989-8108

Give an allowance. Begin banking, budgeting and purchasing experiences. Stress reading, time-telling, money, computer skills and math skills as possible. Read to the child who can't read.

Be attentive to the needs of your other children as well. Sibling workshops are often helpful.

Resources:

- **St. Louis Arc**
www.slarc.org/
314-569-2211
Groups for ages 6 to 11 and 12 to 15.
- **TouchPoint Autism Services**
314-385-5373
Groups for ages 7 through 12.

II. AT AGE 13:

(In addition, see all previous recommendations)

Begin formal person-centered planning. Set preliminary goals for post-school outcomes for employment, living arrangements, education, recreation and leisure. Contact your child's Regional Office

service coordinator or DD Resources service coordinator.

Be sure your child has begun to learn community access skills, such as using public telephone, public transportation, community recreation, ordering from a menu, locating public restrooms, keeping safe.

Resources:

- **SSD Transition Guidebook: Through the Doorway to Adult Life** (see Section III – Tools for Planning Transition - ask your child's teacher for a copy or download from the SSD website: <http://www.ssdmo.org/step3.html> (click on SSD Transition Guidebook under Transition Tools).

Prepare your child for social/sexual development. Know that your son or daughter will not be a child forever and prepare to give understanding and support.

Continue to talk about career paths and choices for the future. Soon the school will be developing a four-year personal plan of study that will prepare him/her to meet the post-secondary goals and spending time now to discover possible goals will provide a better opportunity for success.

Resources:

- **Parent Education and Diversity Awareness of Special School District**
314-989-8108 or 314-989-8438

III. AT AGE 14 TO 16:

(In addition, see all previous recommendations.)

Prepare for your child's Transition Plan, which will become a part of his or her IEP at age 16. Set specific, individual goals of substance. Include community-based vocational instruction

(CBVI) in the Transition Plan of the IEP. Look into “natural supports.” If none of the existing programs meet your child’s needs, consider designing opportunities, volunteer/job training/work experience programs in your community and ask the service provider agencies to implement the plans.

Resources:

- **St. Louis Public Schools
Office of Special Education**
314-454-0010
- **Special School District
of St. Louis County**
314-989-8100
- **Summer Work Experience Programs
(SWEP)**
The mission of the SWEP Program is to provide a meaningful work experience that will assist students in a smoother transition into the world of work. SWEP is designed to provide the experience of working to those who have limited or no work experience or who need extra support in being successful on the job. Contact your child’s special education teacher.

Continue to encourage your young adult to explore self-advocacy skills to learn how to speak for him or herself, to make decisions, solve problems and contribute to the community.

Resources:

- **Fred Saigh Youth Leadership Program**
(St. Louis County students with disabilities - contact your child’s SSD teacher)
- **MPACT (Missouri Parents Act)**
[www.ptimpact.org](http://ptimpact.org/)
800-743-7634
- **Paraquad Youth Group**
<http://www.paraquad.org/>
314-289-4200

- **People First**
314-289-4220
- **SSD Parent Education & Diversity
Awareness workshops**
www.ssdmo.org/cool_tools/workshops.html
314-989-8108 or 314-989-8460
- **SSD website**
www.ssdmo.org/step3/explore_iep_selfadvocacy.htm

Family’s Role in Transition Planning.

Advocate for a curriculum that will prepare your student for work and community. Include goals for community job training if needed for your child.

Investigate post-secondary education options with your son or daughter. Get information about admissions requirements, accessibility, adaptations and supports.

Communicate the value of work to your son or daughter.

Get to know state and local decision-makers.

Attend workshops on transition planning. Learn what options are currently available, as well as what new, cutting-edge ideas are being tried in other parts of the country.

Resources:

- **MPACT (Missouri Parents Act)**
<http://ptimpact.org/>
800-743-7634
- **SSD Parent Education
& Diversity Awareness**
www.ssdmo.org/cool_tools/workshops.html
314-989-8108
- **St. Louis Public Schools**
Talk to your resource teacher or school counselor

Investigate summer volunteer experience. Use your imagination to come up with summer volunteer opportunities, which are valuable job training for your teenager. Hospitals, adult day care centers, not-for-profit organizations. Child day care centers are among the possibilities. In some cases a family member or other non-professional may need to “job coach” the young adult to begin with or for the entire time.

Resources:

- **United Way Summer Volunteer Guide for Youth**
www.stl.unitedway.org/volunteer.aspx
314-539-4299
- **St. Louis Arc**
www.slarc.org
314-569-2215

Look into summer work experience beginning at age 16. Most summer jobs expect the applicant to have basic job skills. Some offer job skill training.

Resources:

- **Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP)** – contact your child’s SSD teacher
- **St. Louis Agency on Training & Employment**
314-589-8000 (SLATE/MO. Career Center)- (Youth City Residents)

Apply for a Missouri ID card or driver’s license at a Missouri License Bureau Office at age16.

Resources:

- **Missouri Department of Revenue Driver’s Guide**
http://dor.mo.gov/forms/Driver_Guide.pdf

Explore service providers for adults to see what options exist for both employment and residential living. Contact your Regional Office service coordinator for a complete listing of adult service providers for both employment and residential living or go online and download the SSD Resource Directory from <https://www.ssdmo.org/step3.html> (Click on SSD Resource Directory under Transition Tools.) Start making calls and visiting providers. Begin to develop your own on-going assessment of what is and isn’t out there. Keep notes on names and phone numbers as you continue to build a network. Talk to experienced parents.

Resources:

- **SSD Resource Directory for Transition Related Services for Persons with Disabilities in the Greater St. Louis Area** - contact your child’s IEP chairperson for a copy
- **Parent Education & Diversity Awareness**
314-989-8108 or 989-8460
- **SSD Website Step 3 – Planning for Adult Life**
<http://www.ssdmo.org/step3.html>

**IV. AT AGE 18:
(In addition, see all previous recommendations.)**

Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid and/or Medicare. Eligibility at age 18 is based on child’s income only.

Resources:

- **Social Security Administration**
1-800-772-1213

Make education ongoing - continue reading to the child who can't read, explore continuing education programs, technical training colleges, community colleges, and college programs with resources to support students with disabilities.

Resources:

- **College for Living (now called Continuing Education through Paraquad)**
<http://www.paraquad.org/paraquad-services-focus-independent-living/disability-education-services>
Provides training and skill development in advocacy and independent living skills
- **St. Louis Community Colleges, Access Office Continuing Education**
Florissant Valley: 314-513-4444 or 513-4549
Forest Park: 314-644-9260 or 644-9174
Meramec: 314-984-7673 or 984-7704
Access offices provide accommodations for students with disabilities who wish to enroll in the existing credit program or non-credit continuing education classes.
- **SSD Resource Directory for Transition Related Services for Persons with Disabilities in the Greater St. Louis Area** - contact your child's IEP chairperson for a copy or go online and download the SSD Resource Directory from <https://www.ssdmo.org/step3.html> (Click on SSD Resource Directory under Transition Tools.) Under post-secondary education look for Transitional Post-Secondary Programs and Post-Secondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities
- **MO-AHEAD - The Missouri College Guidebook and College Profiles**
www.moahead.org/guidebook/guidebook.html

Make arrangements for your young adult to register to vote.

Resources:

- **Board of Election Commissioners**
www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/Elections/VoterRegistration
County: 314-615-1800
<http://stlelections.com>
City: 314-622-4336
More than 600 registration sites including most city halls, libraries and schools in addition to Special School District facilities, local branches of the Community College Districts, the University of MO-St. Louis, and various businesses, union halls and churches.

Make arrangements for your son to register for the draft (required)

Resources:

- **U.S. Post Office** - any branch
- **Register online:**
<http://www.sss.gov/regist.htm>

Keep in touch with your Regional Office service coordinator and make sure your case is active. Invite your service coordinator to IEP and transition plan meetings. Discuss plans for your young adult's future and gather as much specific information about transition to adult life from your service coordinator as possible.

Revisit service providers for adults to see what new options exist for employment and residential living.

Some major service providers are listed on previous pages. Contact your Regional Office service coordinator for a complete listing or visit www.plboard.com for additional resources.

Request that community based vocational instruction be a major component of the IEP.

Become familiar with Vocational Rehabilitation (often referred to as DVR, VR, or Voc Rehab). Apply for services a full year before your adult leaves school.

Resources:

- **Regional Office / Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities**
<http://dmh.mo.gov>
St. Louis County Office 314-877-2711
- **Vocational Rehabilitation**
<http://dese.mo.gov/vr/vocrehab.htm>
314-877-1500

Learn about the implications and levels of guardianship. Full or even limited guardianship is not for every family. Talk with parents who have dealt with the issue of guardianship. Get perspectives from both sides. Once guardianship is granted, it is not easy to reverse.

Resources:

- **Missouri Guardianship Online Workbook and Missouri Guardianship: A Resource Guide at the Missouri Development Disabilities Resource Center website:** <http://www.moddrc.org/>

Check on health insurance coverage for your child. See if your son or daughter can continue to be covered under your policy. Some insurance companies require an application for a dependent child with a disability to be submitted before the child reaches age 19.

One or two years before graduation, initiate or update Futures Plan with school.

Resources:

- **SSD Transition Guidebook: Through the Doorway to Adult Life** (see Section III – Tools for Planning Transition - ask your child's teacher for a copy or download from the SSD website: <http://www.ssdmo.org/step3.html> (click on SSD Transition Guidebook under Transition Tools)

V. AT AGE 20 (or year of leaving school):

(In addition, see all previous recommendations.)

Check with Regional Office to be sure your case is active. Invite your child's service coordinator to the IEP meeting. Discuss which adult service agencies your child will be utilizing and make contact with those agencies to enroll in service or open an active file.

Coordinate with your service coordinator to develop and update a person centered plan on a yearly basis. Ensure that the plan includes future support needs, resources and meets your child's post-secondary goals.

Contact Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Apply for a counselor and make arrangements for assessments. Determination of eligibility can take 60 days, and assessments can take up to six months.

Resources:

- **Vocational Rehabilitation**
9900 Page Avenue, Suite 104
St. Louis, MO 63132
<http://dese.mo.gov/vr/vocrehab.htm>
314-877-1500
Other office locations are listed on the

website. Invite your VR counselor to attend your child's IEP. Ask for input and discuss work options. Choose a vocational training or supported employment agency with the help of a VR counselor. Begin the process toward job development, which can take a year or more.

Brainstorm for possible job leads. Use your family, friends, business associates and your child's futures planning group. Network with community contacts as you take an active role in job development for your child.

Investigate transportation options.

Learn about bus training and public transportation. Check with your Regional Office service coordinator for options. Life Skills has a transportation specialist to help you plan appropriate options for your child. Inquire about Para-transit Card (ADA) to access Call-A-Ride.

Resources:

- **Easter Seals Midwest**
314-567-7705
- **St. Louis Society**
314-989-1188 ext.13
- **Metro** - for application for Metro Discount Card or ADA application and Metro Bus Training.
www.metrostlouis.org
314-982-1510
- **Mercy Medical Center** – Head Injury Resource - Driver evaluation, training & assessment
314-432-8300

Continue to increase independence and interdependence through socialization activities.

Resources:

- **Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis**
- free "Guide to Leisure Services" and

quarterly newsletters:
www.recreationcouncil.org/
City: 314-772-2299
County: 314-726-6044
St. Charles: 636-922-8313

Continue to plan for future living arrangements for your young adult, either in supported or independent living. Families need to continue to take an active, assertive role in exploring what options are available by checking out agencies that offer residential services, and in coming up with creative solutions to individual situations.

Take advantage of the networks you have been building with other parents and advocates through support groups, schools, etc. Talk both with parents who have already found residential answers for their children and with those who are in the process of exploring various options.

Talk seriously with your own immediate and extended family about visions, goals, and practical steps toward the continuing journey on the road of transition. Include your young adult with a disability in the discussions.

A note to families of individuals needing residential living arrangements with 24-hour "protective oversight": All community placement programs are funded by the Department of Mental Health. Funding is limited for these services. Critical and emergency cases take precedence for placement and there are often more critical cases than funds to cover them.

In spite of these statistics, it is a good idea to talk to your Regional Office service coordinator about community living options. Continue to stay in contact with your service coordinator in case an unexpected emergency occurs.

Your service coordinator can also be a resource for social services that can make living at home easier for your child and you.

A note to families of individuals who need only “planned intermittent support” and have some financial resources:

You can start with your Regional Office service Coordinator or contact a lead agency directly. Your service coordinator should have a complete list of agencies. Your young adult will need to be able to live independently with limited assistance, and have a job or other resources to be able to pay all or most of the rent and utilities.

*Exit the school system with an updated Futures Plan.
Hang in there!*