

# Section V — Transition

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## Parent Handbook

**Parent Education & Diversity Awareness**

**Special School District of St. Louis County**

**12110 Clayton Road**

**St. Louis, MO 63131**

**(314) 989-8108/989-8438/989-8194**

**<http://www.ssdmo.org>**

# TRANSITION TIMELINE

## TOWARD SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION: A CHECKLIST FOR THE FIRST 21 YEARS

*By Jean Brokaw and Margaret Lewis, each the parent of a young adult with a developmental disability. Written for The Transition Council and first published 1997, current revision 2012.*

### **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.

### **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 everyone 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:**

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness - NAMI St. Louis**  
[www.namistl.org](http://www.namistl.org)  
314-962-4670
- **Down Syndrome Association of Greater St. Louis**  
[www.dsagsl.org/](http://www.dsagsl.org/)  
314-961-2504
- **Family Support Network**  
<http://www.epworth.org/programs/family-support-network-fsn/>  
314-918-3301
- **Missouri Families for Effective Autism Treatment (MO-FEAT)**  
[www.mo-feat.org/](http://www.mo-feat.org/) 636-527-FEAT (3328)
- **MPACT (Missouri Parents Act)** [www.missouriparentsact.org](http://www.missouriparentsact.org)  
800-743-7634
- **Sharing Our Strengths**  
<http://mofamilytofamily.org/projects/sharing-our-strengths/>  
800-444-0821
- **SSD Parent Education and Diversity Awareness / Family & Community Resource Center** [http://www.ssdmo.org/cool\\_tools/fcrc.html](http://www.ssdmo.org/cool_tools/fcrc.html)  
314-989-8460
- **St. Louis Learning Disability Association (LDA)** [www.ldastl.org/](http://www.ldastl.org/) 314-966-3088
- **St. Louis Arc** [www.slarc.org/](http://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

314-587-4800

Fax: 314-877-5606

**St. Louis County Satellite Office**

4040 Seven Hills Drive

Florissant, MO 63033

314-475-7600

Fax: 314-877-3110

- **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

1-866-583-2392

[www.mofirststeps.com](http://www.mofirststeps.com)

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

- **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.

314-454-0010

- **Contact your Regional Office service coordinator** to learn about and discuss the various options.

**City:** 314-244-8800

**County:** 314-587-4800

**St. Charles County:** 800-358-7765

**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](http://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/](http://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 self-determination 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)** <https://dese.mo.gov/>
- **MPACT (Missouri Parents Act)** [www.missouriparentsact.org](http://www.missouriparentsact.org)  
800-743-7634
- **Legal Services of Eastern Missouri** [www.lsem.org](http://www.lsem.org)  
314-534-4200
  - **Missouri Partners in Policymaking** [http://www.moddcouncil.org/?page\\_id=1892](http://www.moddcouncil.org/?page_id=1892)  
800-500-7878
  - **Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services** [www.moadvocacy.org/](http://www.moadvocacy.org/)  
No-charge for individual advocacy assistance when human rights are violated.  
800-392-8667
- **Office for Civil Rights** <https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/index.html>
- **Paraquad** [www.paraquad.org/](http://www.paraquad.org/)  
Center for Independent Living, advocacy for housing and disability policy, youth group  
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](http://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) <http://www.missouriparentsact.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/](http://www.slarc.org/)

314-569-2211

Provides support and services to children and adults with developmental disabilities.

- **Easter Seals Midwest** [www.eastersealsmidwest.org](http://www.eastersealsmidwest.org)

800-200-2119

Serves persons with developmental disabilities with the major focus on adults.

- **Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis** [www.recreationcouncil.org/](http://www.recreationcouncil.org/)

314-726-6044 County residents

314-772-2299 City residents

Free quarterly newsletters; Summer Opportunities Guide.

- **Paraquad – Continuing Education (formerly College for Living)**

<http://www.paraquad.org/paraquad-services-focus-independent-living/disability-educationservices>

314-289-4200

Provides classes for persons with developmental disabilities age 18 and older.

- **APSE-MO** (Missouri Chapter of the Association for Persons in Supported Employment) <http://www.apsemo.org/>

- **St. Louis Office for Developmental Disability Resources**

<https://www.stlidd.org/>

Service Coordination also available

314-421-0090

- **Governor's Council on Disability** <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/>

800-877-8249

- **Missouri Family to Family** <http://mofamilytofamily.org/>

800-444-0821

- **Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council** <http://www.moddcouncil.org/>

800-500-7878

## **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/](http://www.slcl.org/)

Books, periodicals and videos for families of individuals with developmental disabilities.

- **St. Louis City Public Library** [www.slpl.org](http://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](http://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

**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 day centers.

**Resources:**

- **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 314-587-4800 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](http://www.ssdmo.org/cool_tools/workshops.html) 314-989-8108 or 314-989-8438 or 314-989-8194
- **MPACT (Missouri Parents Act)** <http://missouriparentsact.org/upcoming-trainings-events/>  
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](http://www.midwestspecialneedstrust.org)

573-882-3388 or 888-239-8055

•Funding a special needs trust:

<https://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. 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](http://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/](http://www.recreationcouncil.org/)

County Residents and TDD users - 314-726-6044

City Residents - 314-772-2299

- **SSD Parent Education Workshops** [www.ssdmo.org/cool\\_tools/workshops.html](http://www.ssdmo.org/cool_tools/workshops.html)

314-989-8108

**Give an allowance. Begin banking, budgeting and purchasing experiences.**

Stress reading, telling time, 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/](http://www.slarc.org/)

314-569-2211

Groups for ages 6 to 11 and 12 to 15.

- **Easter Seals Midwest** <http://www.eastersealsmidwest.org/>

800-200-2119

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.

**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 or 314-989-8194

### **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)

<http://sef-stl.org/programs/fred-saigh-leadership-program/>

- **MPACT (Missouri Parents Act)**

[www.missouriparentsact.org](http://www.missouriparentsact.org)

800-743-7634

- **Paraquad Youth Group** <http://www.paraquad.org/>

314-289-4200

- **People First**

314-289-4200

- **SSD Parent Education & Diversity Awareness workshops**

[www.ssdmo.org/cool\\_tools/workshops.html](http://www.ssdmo.org/cool_tools/workshops.html)

314-989-8108 or 314-989-8460

- **I'm Determined** [www.imdetermined.org](http://www.imdetermined.org)

**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.

## **Transition Steps**

### **Before the IEP**

- ✓ Futures plan (Optional)
- ✓ Transition Planning Checklist
- ✓ Make sure all required participants are at the IEP meeting and any extra agencies you want to be there.
- ✓ Make sure you have received an age of majority letter by your student's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday
- ✓ Ask about other assessments that may be needed

### **During the IEP**

- ✓ Complete present levels of performance with your students' and your input.
- ✓ Identify a post-secondary goal. Complete form C of the IEP. This is the transition form used for students who are turning 16 or are 16 and above.
- ✓ Complete the special considerations page
- ✓ Help to develop goals and action plans, especially related to the post-secondary goal.

### **After the IEP**

- ✓ Ask if a portfolio has been started and, if not, ask that one be developed.
- ✓ Ask for linkages to different agencies: St. Louis Regional Center; recreation and leisure; Vocational Rehabilitation; supported employment agencies, to name a few.

### **Ongoing**

- ✓ Follow up whenever you feel your young person's needs are not being met.
- ✓ Keep encouraging that your son or daughter take an active role in the IEP and transition planning.
- ✓ Ask the teacher to explore Self-Determination and how that can be inserted into their daily activities.

**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://missouriparentsact.org/>

800-743-7634

- **SSD Parent Education & Diversity Awareness**

[www.ssdmo.org/cool\\_tools/workshops.html](http://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.stlvolunteer.org/svg](http://www.stlvolunteer.org/svg)

314-539-4299

- **St. Louis Arc** [www.slarc.org/](http://www.slarc.org/)

314-569-2211

**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** <http://stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/slate/>

314-589-8000

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

**Resource:**

- **Missouri Department of Revenue Driver’s Guide**

[http://dor.mo.gov/forms/Driver\\_Guide.pdf](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. 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:**

- **Parent Education & Diversity Awareness**  
314-989-8108 or 989-8460
- **SSD Website – Step # 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.

**Resource:**

- **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:**

- **Paraquad – Continuing Education (formerly College for Living)**  
<http://www.paraquad.org/paraquad-services-focus-independent-living/disability-educationservices>  
314-289-4200  
Provides classes for persons with developmental disabilities age 18 and older
- **St. Louis Community Colleges, Access Office Continuing Education**  
[http://www.stlcc.edu/disAbility/Access\\_Office/](http://www.stlcc.edu/disAbility/Access_Office/)  
Florissant Valley 314-513-4551  
Forest Park 314-644-9039  
Meramec 314-984-7673  
Wildwood 636-422-2000

Access offices provide accommodations for students with disabilities who wish to enroll in the existing credit program or non-credit continuing education classes.

- **MO-AHEAD - The Missouri College Guidebook and College Profiles**  
<https://moahead.org/welcome-to-mo-ahead/>

## **Make arrangements for your young adult to register to vote.**

### **Resource:**

- **Board of Election Commissioners**

[www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/Elections/VoterRegistration](http://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)**

### **Resource:**

- **U.S. Post Office** - any branch

- **Register online:** <http://www.sss.gov/registration-info>

## **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](http://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. **Resource:**

- **Regional Office / Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities**

<http://dmh.mo.gov>

St. Louis County Office 314-587-4800 • **Vocational Rehabilitation** <https://dese.mo.gov/adult-learning-rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation>

North: 314-475-7999

South: 314-877-1900

West: 314-587-4877

**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.

**Resource:**

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

**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.**

**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.

**Resource:**

- **Vocational Rehabilitation**

9900 Page Avenue, Suite 104

St. Louis, MO 63132

<http://dese.mo.gov/vr/vocrehab.htm>

314-587-4877

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** <http://www.eastersealsmidwest.org/>  
800-200-2119
- **Lifebridge Partnership** [www.lifebridgestl.org](http://www.lifebridgestl.org)  
314-989-1188
- **Metro** - for application for Metro Discount Card or ADA application. [www.metrostlouis.org](http://www.metrostlouis.org)  
314-982-1510
- **Mercy Medical Center** – Driver assessment & training program  
636-893-1100

**Continue to increase independence and interdependence through socialization activities.**

**Resource:**

- **Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis** - free "Guide to Leisure Services" and quarterly newsletters: [www.recreationcouncil.org/](http://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!**

## TYPES OF TRANSITIONS

Transition means change from one educational program or setting to another educational program or setting. Transitions will occur several times while your child is in school. Some of these types of transitions are listed below:

### •From infant/toddler program to preschool program.

Tips:

- Begin planning at least six months before the child is moved;
- Work with the teachers and service providers in the new setting;
- Ask questions that will help you and your child prepare for this change;
- Tell the teachers about your child (communication, medical needs, etc.);
- If possible, make a videotape at one setting to take to the new one.

### •From preschool to kindergarten/elementary. This involves your child going from a home care or preschool program to a regular school setting.

Tips:

- Visit the school ahead of time so your child knows where he will be going to school;

- If possible, meet your child's teacher and let your child visit his classroom before school starts;
- Meet with your child's new teacher to discuss his needs and your concerns or ideas about his education.

•**From elementary school to middle school.** This may involve changing schools and/or going from a smaller to a larger school.

Tips:

- Talk to your child about making new friends;
- Answer any questions your child may have about his new school;
- Visit the school and discuss any concerns or ideas;
- Help make students, teachers and other parents aware of students with disabilities.

•**From middle school to high school.** Your child may now change classes and have many different teachers. Peers may become increasingly important for your child. Extracurricular activities provide good opportunities for your child to be with his peers.

Tips:

- Visit the school and find out what activities will be available for your child;
- Arrange a meeting with all the teachers so you can explain your child's needs;
- Take your child to school to meet his teachers before school starts.

•**After high school.** At the time your child turns 16, the law requires that a transition plan be written as part of his or her individualized education plan (IEP).

Action plans and IEP goals must address some of the following transition areas if applicable to the student's needs:

- Instruction
- Related services
- Employment
- Education and/or training
- Community experiences, such as shopping, housing options and public transportation
- Independent living
- Functional vocational evaluation

The transition plan must also include referral to appropriate agencies such as vocational rehabilitation or supported employment.

Remember, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) gives persons with disabilities specific rights in terms of employment and where they may chose to live.

Tips:

- Plan as far ahead as possible for your child's transition after high school;
- Let your child get used to his new place to live or work gradually;
- Be prepared with an alternative plan if a residence or job placement is unavailable;
- Involve your child in planning for his future.

## **SSD TRANSITION OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS AGES 17 TO 21**

### **Option 1:**

#### **After graduation with diploma:**

Students can meet graduation requirements by completing IEP goals or by achieving the required graduation credits from the high school.

Work (with or without support from the Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services for the Blind)

College/Technical School (with or without support from the Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services for the Blind)

Note: After graduation with a diploma, the student is no longer eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), but may have some rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Some students may attend graduation exercises at their high school, but their diploma is deferred until they get work experience or life skills, as determined by the IEP committee.

### **Option 2:**

**The student may still need to meet IEP transition goals or enroll in courses to complete requirements for graduation.** This is an IEP decision and may occur until age 21. After four years of high school, students may remain in school until age 21 if they have not graduated with a diploma. The student with a disability who begins the school year at age 20 may finish the school year even though he or she turns 21 during that school year.

Before graduation, these additional programs are available that may meet the student's transition needs:

## **Vocational Skills Program**

Transition from school to adult life must be addressed in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) beginning at age 16, and earlier if appropriate. Often, students are prepared at the time of graduation from high school to meet their post-secondary goals for employment, education and independent living. However, when a student has attended four years of high school and still has transition needs in order to successfully meet post-secondary goals, then he or she may be considered through the IEP process for Community-Based Transition Services.

The mission of Vocational Skills Program is to provide a continuum of supports and services to students and families to assist the students in gaining skills needed to achieve realistic and meaningful post-secondary goals.

Vocational Skills Program are provided at one of the many community-based classrooms/work sites that are located within three zones. Contact your case manager.

To assist the zone leadership team with assigning Community-Based Transition Services, parents are asked to complete and return a Parent/Student Survey to the case manager before or at the time of the IEP meeting.

## **CBVI: Community-Based Vocational Instruction**

Community-Based Vocational Instruction (CBVI) is designed to help high school students learn work behaviors in a real-work environment. Students who have post-secondary goals for employment who need to learn appropriate work behaviors in a real-life setting and will need supported employment are eligible for this program. Worksites are developed close to the high school. Transportation to the worksite is provided by SSD or Metro and students are accompanied by a teacher and teacher assistant. Students may spend anywhere from one to five days per week at the worksite for a specified amount of time. Teachers record student progress on work skills and appropriate behaviors or soft skills that are needed in order to be successful in meeting post-secondary goals for employment. SSD currently has CBVI programs in more than 100 local businesses.

## **Graduation requirements**

According to the state of Missouri, a student with a disability may graduate if:

- IEP goals and objectives, as measured by the evaluation procedures and criteria specified in the IEP are met, or
- By taking and passing regular courses with or without modification After meeting local graduation requirements and receiving a diploma, a student may choose to:
  - Work with or without support from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Rehabilitation Services for the Blind
  - Attend a college, university, community college, or vocational or trade school with or without support from the VR or

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind ○ Participate in a day program or volunteer in the community

### **COOP: Cooperative Work Experience**

The Cooperative Work Experience program (COOP) is available to qualifying high school students with disabilities whose IEPs indicate the need for work experience in a competitive setting and who also are eligible as clients of VR. Program goals include acquiring general skills related to performing work under supervision, as well as job-related skills.

COOP offers students:

- The opportunity to earn elective credit toward graduation for their work
- The opportunity to be released from school for at least one hour per day
- Supervision by the Work Experience Coordinator (WEC) from the school who will assign credit based on hours worked and provide off-campus supervision
- An opportunity to find entry-level employment prior to graduation
- Support for increasing their ability to find and hold jobs
- Motivation to stay in school
- The opportunity to earn up to four units of elective credits during the school year for off campus work experience

Participants in COOP must be:

- Enrolled in a school where there is a certified WEC and COOP agreement
- At least 16 years old and have an IEP
- Certified eligible by VR
- Able to find their own transportation to and from work
- Competitively employed
- Able to turn in pay stubs to the WEC
- Enrolled in or be receiving related instruction

For more information about the COOP or to explore the possibility of applying, speak to the case manager during the IEP meeting. Decisions about enrolling in the COOP should be made at the IEP meeting well in advance because the certification process for VR may take up to 60 days to complete.

# PERSONAL FUTURES PLANNING

Personal Futures Planning is the identification of personal dreams and goals and the development of an ongoing strategy that makes those dreams and goals a reality. As people change and grow, so do their goals. Personal futures planning is what we do every day while teaching, loving and meeting the needs of our children.

## CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF A PERSONAL FUTURES PLAN:

- It's never too early (young) or too late (old) to begin to plan for the future.
- If possible, ask the person with disabilities what his personal dreams or visions are for his or her future.
- In the case of a young child or someone who can't communicate his wishes, ask the family or ask yourself what would someone without a disability want? Where does he want to live, work and play?
- Focus on capabilities and talents. Most of the time we cannot "fix" a disability, but we can identify strengths.
- Focus on what the person CAN do — not on what he cannot do.
- Meet with the planning team to review and revise plans on a regular basis.

Contact your student's case manager

# ADULT SERVICES

Some students with disabilities are not ready for independent living or employment when their school experience ends. There are agencies in the community that provide services to students with disabilities following their graduation from school.

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

**The St. Louis Regional Office**, an agency of the Missouri Department of Mental Health Division of Developmental Disabilities, serves a four-county area that includes St. Louis City, St. Louis County, St. Charles County and Jefferson County. Most public services for adults with intellectual and physical disabilities are delivered through the Regional Office.

To be eligible for services from the Regional Office, your child must have a mental and/or physical disability that is manifested prior to the age of 22 and is likely to continue indefinitely and result in functional limitations in two or more major life areas (i.e., self care, language, self-direction, capacity for independent living or mobility).

The Regional Office provides case management services that consist of assessing needs, identifying priorities, identifying a plan, procuring services through referral or actual purchase, providing advocacy, monitoring appropriateness of services and reevaluation of needs. Services may include family support, counseling, therapies and residential services.

To apply for services, the applicant or the applicant's legal guardian should contact 314-8772711 and asks for the Intake Department. Eligibility is determined during this initial process. Individuals who are eligible for services are assigned a case manager. NOTE: Once eligible, it is important to remain active and in touch with the assigned case manager.

**Contact:** 314-587-4800 (Intake Department) or <http://dmh.mo.gov/dd/facilities/>

**St. Louis Office for Developmental Disability Resources** offers services to St. Louis City residents with developmental disabilities. This office is responsible for administration of city tax dollars for services for persons who are developmentally disabled. Funding goes to establish, expand and provide a variety of programs and services. Respite coordination is available.

**Contact:** 314-421-0090 or [www.stlidd.org](http://www.stlidd.org)

**Social Security Income (SSI)** is a federal program run by Social Security that pays monthly checks to people who are elderly or have disabilities and qualify based on income and what they own. **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)** is a federal payment for workers with disabilities.

The Social Security Administration has an excellent, easy-to-navigate website with many publications you can order or download. You can contact your local Social Security Office

(<https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp> to search for an office by ZIP code), call 800-772-1213 or go to the website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

**Medicaid** helps pay for doctor and hospital bills, some adaptive equipment and additional services. To request Medicaid applications:

**Contact:** 800-772-1213 or <http://dss.mo.gov/fsd/msmed.htm>

**Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** is designed to help individuals who have physically or intellectual disabilities become employable. To be considered eligible for services, an individual must meet the following criteria: 1) have a physical or mental disability that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment, and 2) can benefit in terms of employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services.

Services range from diagnostic and evaluation services to help establish eligibility, physical restoration, guidance and counseling, or to provide training from a variety of settings such as supported employment, on-the-job training, work adjustment training, trade schools, colleges, job readiness training and more.

Many students who are juniors and seniors in high school can benefit substantially from school directed and supervised learning experiences that cannot be readily provided within a regular setting, but can be made on an off-campus location.

A cooperative agreement between the high school and VR allows students who have IEPs that indicate the need for work experience (and who are also eligible as clients of VR) to participate in on-the-job training sites in the community during school hours. Students receive school credit toward graduation while also learning to adjust to the world of work, with appropriate worker identification, traits and attitudes. If the local high school has no cooperative agreement with VR, students may still apply in the last semester of their senior year in preparation of services for after graduation.

VR has four district offices In the St. Louis area.

**Contact: West office - 314-587-4877**

**North office - 314-475-7999**

**South office - 314-877-1900**

**Downtown office - 314-877-2940**

**Rehabilitation Services for the Blind** offers rehabilitation, vocational and training placement, counseling, guidance, physical and psychiatric evaluations and treatment. It also provides educational materials. **Contact: North 314-264-7601**

**South 314-933-7311**

<http://dss.mo.gov/fsd/rsb/>

## **TRANSPORTATION**

A key component of living independently in the community is having access to reliable transportation. Persons with disabilities become isolated and segregated from their community when transportation is not available to and from work, for shopping, medical appointments and recreation/leisure activities. Accessible and affordable transportation is necessary for students with disabilities to successfully transition from school to adulthood.

Depending on your child's needs as an individual with a disability, he or she might rely on public mass transit, door-to-door paratransit, a private vehicle, or a combination of these options. Travel and mobility training, as well as driver evaluation, education and assessment are important factors to consider when exploring transportation options.

A quick assessment will help you identify which skills your child already has.

### **Does your child have these mobility and community access skills?**

- Have pedestrian safety skills/knowledge
- Ride public transportation safely
- Plan or schedule public transportation
- Arrange cab or individual transit
- Drive with license
- Have Call-a-Ride card