

# Transitioning to Adulthood – What You Need to Know

## At a Glance

Life is full of transitions, and one of the more remarkable ones occurs when we get ready to leave high school and go out in the world as young adults. When the student has a disability, it's especially helpful to plan ahead for that transition. In fact, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires it.

Transition planning helps kids with IEPs prepare for life after high school. Under federal law, transition planning must start by the time your child turns 16. Planning is about more than just college — it covers jobs and daily life skills too.

## Planning & Communication is Key!

### The Domains of Adulthood to Consider

The definition of transition services mentions specific domains of adulthood to be addressed during transition planning.

- Postsecondary education
- Vocational education
- Integrated employment (including supported employment)
- Continuing and adult education
- Adult services
- Independent living
- Community participation

### Tips That May Help Your Child's Transition to Adulthood

- Develop self-determination & self-advocacy skills
- Connect with adult service providers
- Expand social and community support networks
- Explore housing options
- Build a work resume
- Plan for health care needs
- Learn “soft” employment skills
- Visit postsecondary training and education programs
- Practice money management skills
- Prepare for change!

# Health Care Transition Timeline

## for Parents/Caregivers

### Age 12-13

- Help your teen learn about their own health condition, medications, and allergies.
- Encourage your teen to ask their doctor questions about their own health.
- Ask your teen's doctor if and at what age they no longer care for young adults.

### Age 14-15

- Learn what your teen knows about their own health, health care, and family medical history. Both you and your teen can take Got Transition's Transition Readiness Assessments\* and discuss this together and with the doctor.
- Have your teen carry their own health insurance card.
- Help your teen learn more about their own health and what to do in case of an emergency.
- Help your teen practice making a doctor's appointment and ordering prescription refills (either by phone, online, or through an app).
- Encourage your teen to see the doctor alone for part of the doctor's visit to help gain independence in managing their own health and health care.

### Age 16-17

- Encourage your teen to make doctor's appointments, see the doctor alone, ask the doctor questions they may have, and refill medications.
- Ask the doctor to talk with your teen about their privacy rights when they turn 18.
- Work with your teen and the doctor to make and share a medical summary.
- Before your teen turns 18 and becomes a legal adult, figure out if they will need help making health care decisions. If so, ask your Family Voices chapter for local resources.
- Talk with your teen about the age they want to transfer to a new doctor for adult care.

### Age 18-21

- At age 18, your child is a legal adult and legally responsible for their care. You cannot access their medical information or be in the doctor's visit unless your young adult agrees or certain legal forms have been completed.
- If you need local resources on supported decision-making, ask your Family Voices chapter.
- Learn if there are additional changes at 18 that affect your young adult (e.g., health insurance, Social Security Income).
- Encourage your young adult to ask their current doctor to find a new adult doctor. Make sure that the new doctor accepts your young adult's health insurance, and help them learn if there are any charges at the visit.
- Encourage your young adult to keep a copy of their medical summary and always carry their health insurance information with them.

### Age 22-25

- Encourage your young adult to get care from their adult doctor, learn to manage their own health and health care, and update their medical summary.
- Encourage your young adult to stay insured. If they change health insurance, encourage them to make sure their doctor takes their insurance and learn if there are any charges at the visit.

\*For a Transition Readiness Assessment for youth, visit <https://gottransition.org/6ce/leaving-readiness-assessment-youth> and for a version for parents/caregivers, visit <https://gottransition.org/6ce/leaving-readiness-assessment-parent>.

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## Transition Readiness Changing Roles for Families

Compare your answers with your child. You might be surprised what they know or what they want to learn. Work on a plan to increase their health care skills. Share with the medical team the skills that you and your child are working on. It takes time and practice to learn and demonstrate these skills. Best time to start, is today!

Health & Wellness 101 The Basic Skills	Yes I do this	want to do this	I need to learn how	Someone else will have to do this- Who?
<b>KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH ISSUES/DIAGNOSIS</b>				
1. My child understands his/her health care needs, and disability and can explain these needs to others.				
2. My child can explain to others how our family's customs and beliefs might affect healthcare decisions and medical treatments.				
3. My child knows his/her health and wellness baseline (pulse, respiration rate, elimination habits)				
4. My child knows health symptoms that need quick medical attention.				
5. My child knows what to do in case he/she have a medical emergency				
<b>BEING PREPARED</b>				
6. My child carries his/her health insurance card everyday				
My child carries his/her important health information with me every day (i.e.: medical summary, including medical diagnosis, list of medications, allergy info., doctor's numbers, drug store number, etc.)				
<b>TAKING CHARGE</b>				
8. My child calls for his/her own doctor appointments.				
9. My child knows he/she has an option to see the doctor by them self.				
10. Before a doctor's appointment my child prepares written questions to ask.				
11. My child racks his/her own appointments & prescription refills expiration dates.				
12. My child calls in his/her own prescriptions refills.				
13. My child has a part in filing medical records and receipts at home.				
14. My child pays for the co-pays for medical visits.				
15. My child co-signs the "permission for medical treatment" form (with or without signature stamp) or can direct others to do so).				
16. My child helps monitor his/her medical equipment so it's in good working condition (daily and routine maintenance).				
<b>AFTER AGE 18</b>				
17. My child and our family have a plan so he/she can keep my healthcare insurance after turning 18 and 26.				
18. My child will be prepared to sign his/her own medical forms (HIPAA, permission for treatment, release of records)				
My child and our family have discussed and plan to develop a legal Power of Attorney for health care decisions in the event health changes and he/she is unable to make decisions for them self. (Everyone in the family should have one!)				

You are welcome to use Changing Roles "as is" or adapt it to your setting or needs. Revised in 2011 by Patti Hackett, MEd. This tool was adapted from the federally funded, HRSA/MCHB HRTW Tool - Changing Roles, developed by Patti Hackett, Ceci Shapland & Mallory Cyr, 2006, 2009.

## Transition Readiness Changing Roles for Youth

Compare your answers with your family. They might be surprised what you know or what you want to learn. Work on a plan to increase your health care skills. Share with the medical team the skills that you are working on. It takes time and practice to learn and demonstrate these skills. Best time to start, is today!

<b>Health &amp; Wellness 101</b> <b>The Basic Skills</b>	<b>Yes</b> I do this	I want to do this	I need to learn how	Someone else will have to do this - Who?
<b>KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH ISSUES/DIAGNOSIS</b>				
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 healthcare decisions and medical treatments.				
3. I know my health and wellness baseline (pulse, respiration rate, elimination habits)				
4. I know my symptoms that need quick medical attention.				
5. I know what to do in case I have a medical emergency				
<b>BEING PREPARED</b>				
6. I carry my health insurance card everyday				
7. 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.)				
<b>TAKING CHARGE</b>				
8. I call for my own doctor appointments.				
9. I know I have an option to see my doctor by myself.				
10. Before a doctor's appointment I prepare written questions to ask.				
11. I track my own appointments and prescription refills expiration dates.				
12. I call in my own prescriptions refills.				
13. I have a part in filing my medical records and receipts at home.				
14. I pay my co-pays for medical visits.				
15. I co-sign the "permission for medical treatment" form (with or without signature stamp, or can direct others to do so).				
16. I help monitor my medical equipment so it's in good working condition (daily and routine maintenance).				
<b>AFTER AGE 18</b>				
17. My family and I have a plan so I can keep my healthcare insurance after I turn 18 and 26.				
18. I sign my own medical forms (HIPAA, permission for treatment, release of records)				
19. My family and I have discussed and plan to develop a legal Power of Attorney for health care decisions in the event my health changes and I am unable to make decisions for myself. (Everyone in the family should have one!)				

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# Transition to Adulthood Guidance

## Housing options

- ***Creative housing and therapeutic community websites***  
[https://firstwnc.org/housing-options/?fl\\_builder](https://firstwnc.org/housing-options/?fl_builder)

## Employment and vocational services

Planning for employment can start when your child is in high school using their Transition Plan as a first step. There may be a variety of options available after graduation that your care coordinator can assist with. Vocational Rehabilitation may be another source for job sampling and coaching.

- **Polk Vocational Services ----- 828-894-3041**

For over 50 years, PVS has been serving people with disabilities and other life barriers in Polk and surrounding counties. We are proud to be the largest manufacturing employer in Polk County. Empowered by our quality-focused manufacturing, PVS is able to provide meaningful employment and support services for people of all abilities. We're always looking for new people to join the PVS family, including those looking for meaningful employment as well as those who could benefit from our support services. Offerings include day, community, and residential services. Location: 451 Industrial Park Drive, Columbus NC 28722.

## Health care transition

Consult your child's primary medical doctor by the age of 16 to develop a plan for transitioning to adult medical care.

- Got ***Transition*** National resource center on health care transition  
<https://www.gottransition.org/>
- Transitioning ***CYSHCN from Pediatric to Adult Care***  
<https://publichealth.nc.gov/wch/families/transitioningchildren.htm>

## Selective service

If your son is able to "function in public with or without assistance" you are required to register him with the Selective Service System. Even if your son has a disability that you think would disqualify him from military service they must still register as their appropriate classification will be determined later. [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov)

## **College based options**

NC College options for students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

The following resource information contains information about Post-Secondary Education programs including community colleges and universities across North Carolina, as well as other states.

- **College Foundation of North Carolina** To learn more about the offices for students with disabilities at all the colleges in NC, [www.cfnc.org](http://www.cfnc.org) or call 1-866-CFNC (2362) to speak to a representative.
- **The North Carolina Post-Secondary Education Alliance**  
<http://www.cidd.unc.edu/psea/>
- **Think College** This directory includes information on 308 college programs for students with intellectual disability. <https://thinkcollege.net/college-search>

## **Secondary Transition and Instructional Resources**

- **Public Schools of North Carolina – Exceptional Children**  
<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/disability-resources/intellectual-disabilities/secondary-transitions>
- **Affordable Colleges Online**  
<https://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/resources-for-students-with-disabilities/>

## **General Transition and Aging Out Resources**

- **Youth.gov** <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/transition-age-youth>
- **Women's and Children's Health – CYSHCN** – NC Division of Public Health  
<https://publichealth.nc.gov/wch/families/cyshcn.htm>
- **NC Council on Developmental Disabilities Transition Resources**  
<https://nccdd.org/welcome/a-z-resources-list/category/transition.html>
- **Got Transition**  
<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/disability-resources/intellectual-disabilities/secondary-transitions>

## TRANSITION ACTION CARE PLAN

Child's Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Patient# \_\_\_\_\_ Parents /guardians: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Main Concerns	Related Current Information	Current Plans/Interventions	Person(s) Responsible	Date – Initials	Review Date

<b>Topics to Review</b> Health Promotion Health Condition Management Health Insurance Functional Independence	High School Goals/Plans Post secondary plans Work Plans Independent Living Issues Community Inclusion
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# Adult Health Care Transition

(Insert copies of Transition Plan)