



Family Support & Resource Center
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TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

By the time your child reaches the age of 14 years, it is not too soon to begin planning for adulthood. While this may seem early, there are many things that need to be decided, discussed, and initiated before your child exits high school at the age of 21. We suggest that you read, dream, and ask questions of the people who best know your child, including teachers, professionals, friends and other parents who have been through transition with their child.

The following is a checklist to help you begin this process. It is only a general guideline and should not be construed as all-inclusive. There are many valuable publications available to assist you through the Family Support and Resource Center and Dane County Adult Community Services. Familiarize yourself with services by reviewing the document, **The Source: Guide to Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities in Dane County, Wisconsin**, at http://pdf.countyofdane.com/humanservices/dd/source_directory/the_source.pdf

Please note that the following guidelines apply to children who meet the definition of developmental disability as contained in the Wisconsin State Statutes. Not all of this information will apply to children who are eligible for the Family Support Program under the guidelines for significant emotional disturbance or physical impairment.

By Age 14: Your family will want to start **discussing the long-range dreams and desires for your child**. Your child should be part of these discussions. This is an important time to dream about what the optimal situation could be without worrying about realities and constraints. It is important to identify what is important to your child and their areas of interest for future work, living arrangements and recreational/social opportunities.

Ages 14 - 21: Some parents choose to get assistance with Person-Centered Planning by using such tools as **Essential Lifestyle Planning, MAPS, or PATH**. These can be helpful tools to focus on your child's dreams and goals.

Ages 16 - 21 and beyond: Sometimes a **Support Circle** may develop out of planning for your child's future. A circle is a group of people involved in your child's life committed to active planning towards your child's dream for her/his future, and who are willing to meet regularly to work towards common goals. People in a Support Circle should include the child, and may include parents and other relatives, friends, teachers, and other professionals involved in your child's life.

Ages 14 - 21 or 22: The 2005 IDEA Law requires schools to begin transition planning at age 14. The **Individual Transition Plan (ITP)** should be initiated through your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) beginning with the IEP in which your child turns 14 years old. Your child's teacher or school case manager is responsible for beginning this process and your child should be invited to participate. An ITP is a multi-faceted, long range plan for your child's graduation from high school. It will be important to have goals that relate to transition planning in your child's IEP during these years. Consider all the skills your child will need for adulthood and for a successful work, community and home life. Such goals might be related to socialization and friendship, community participation, vocational, transportation, domestic skills, sexuality and protective behaviors, safety, self-advocacy, and health care skills

Ages 14 - 21: Many families complete **Estate Planning** for their child with a disability. There are legal means, such as establishing a Supplemental Trust, to help provide for your child and still allow her/him to maintain government entitlements. You should choose an attorney to guide you who is knowledgeable about both estate planning and about disability issues.

Ages 17 to 19: No later than 1 1/2 years before your child is going to leave school, a formal referral to the **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**, 608/261-0050, should be made. To be eligible for DVR services, a student must have a physical or mental impairment which results in a substantial impediment to employment and she/he must require DVR services to become employed.

Age 17 1/2: If your child's FSRC Case Manager or child's teacher has not already done so, make sure to make a referral to **Dane County's Aging and Disability Resource Center**, 608/240-7476. They will be able to explain Dane County guidelines for supporting adults with disabilities in the community and the timeline to guide you through participant directed services. To learn more about the transition to adult services see, *The Yellow Book – Implementing Choice*, Dane County Adult Community Service.

Age 18: Regardless of the significance of your child's disability, at age 18 she/he will legally become her/his own **Guardian** unless court proceedings are initiated by you or another interested person to obtain legal guardianship of your child. While full guardianship is not always in the best interest of a child, there are a variety of options, such as **Partial (limited) Guardianship; Health Care or Financial Power of Attorney** that may suit your child's needs. Several months before your child's 18th birthday, you will want to thoroughly investigate which option, if any, is the most desirable. For more information contact a knowledgeable attorney or the Guardianship Support Center at 1/800-488-2596 or website: <http://cow.waisman.wisc.edu/resources-guardians.html>.

A list of knowledgeable attorneys can be located through the ARC-Dane County at <http://www.arcdanecounty.org/guardianship.html>. The Dane County Probate Court also has forms available to complete the legal process without using an attorney, although suggest talking with your FSRC Case Manager about whether this might be a good option.

Age 18: If your child does not already receive **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**, you will need to make application through your local Social Security Office, 1-800/807-5995 or <http://www.ssa.gov/>. SSI is a monthly benefit plan for people who are judged to be disabled and have limited income and assets. **Medical Assistance (MA)**, a health insurance plan, is part of the SSI “package”. If your child qualifies for SSI, she/he may also be eligible for **Supplemental Security Income - Exceptional Expense Supplement (SSI-E)** for people having substantial long-term support needs. This application can be made through staff at the Family Support & Resource Center. You may want to consider a Benefits Analysis prior to exiting high school to review impact of paid employment on public benefits.

Age 18: If your child has personal cares needs and not already receiving services, consider making a referral for **MA Personal Care**. At age 18 a child’s parents can be paid to provide daily care through MA Personal Care based on nursing assessment of allowable cares.

Age 18: Acquire **WI identification card** and ability to communicate personal information, <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/apply/idcard.htm>.

Age 18: If your child is interested in learning more about self-advocacy opportunities, contact **People First of Dane County** at 608/263-5557 or view the quarterly **Choices** newsletter about self-determination in Dane County at <http://cow.waismanwisc.edu>.

Age 18: Start planning for transition from pediatric to adult medical providers.

Age 18 - 21: If your child and you have decided that moving out of the family home and into supported living is desirable, review all of your family and child’s resources that might work together to create necessary support. Financial assistance for purchase and/or rehab of a current home may be available from **Movin’ Out, Inc**, 608/251-4446.

Age 18-21: Your child should be spending a majority of her/his days outside of the school building in vocational and community activities. Be sure that your child’s school personnel have found her/him the maximum hours of paid work in the community of which she/he is capable by the time she/he graduates at age 21, so she/he will be eligible at that level for ongoing county-funded vocational services.

Age 20: Your child should have a reliable means of transportation to and from work and understand how to use this transportation.

Age 14 - 22: You are ultimately responsible for making certain that your child has a positive transition experience. You must ask for the assistance you need and share ownership in the outcome. Talk with your child about what is going to happen in her/his future. If feasible, guide your child in learning the tasks of budgeting, shopping, cooking, housekeeping, laundry, and medication management. You will get a better idea of what kind of help she/he will need and the ways she/he learns. Other things to think about and plan for might include community and recreation opportunities for your child as an adult.

Good places to start looking might be your local YMCA, MATC, local health clubs, Madison School Community Recreation (MSCR), UW Mini-Courses, Very Special Arts, Able Trek tours, overnight camps, Church/Temple youth group, Special Olympics, ARC special events or Lov-Dane.