

TRANSITIONS & PLANNING FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

A RESOURCE GUIDE



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ACRONYMS

AAA: Area Agencies on Aging
ADA: American's with Disabilities Act
CCC: Case Conference Committee
DDRS: Division of Disability & Rehabilitation Services
FAPE: Free and Appropriate Public Education
IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP: Individual Education Plan
ITP: Individual Transition Plan
PASS: Plan for Achieving Self-Support
SSA: Social Security Administration
SSI: Social Security Income
SSDI: Social Security Disability Income
VRS: Vocational Rehabilitation Services

GLOSSARY

Age of majority: The age when a person is legally considered an adult, responsible for oneself, and can make certain legal and business decisions not possible before.

Assistive Technology: Equipment and services used to maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a person with a disability.

Community Access: Activities, special assistance, advocacy and education to help eligible persons participate actively in their community.

Community Rehabilitation Programs: An organization in the community that is qualified to provide specific types of vocational rehabilitation services.

Functional Vocational Rehabilitation: Services and programs that help people with disabilities develop skills related to a job or career.

Individual Education Plan: A plan for any student with a documented disability meeting the state requirements for Special Education. It is required by the IDEA to provide FAPE.

Pre-vocational skills: Skills that are needed for successful employment, including household skills, personal organization skills, and work readiness skills.

Respite care: A service that allows parents or caregivers short-term relief (usually a few hours) from caring for a person by providing in-home care by a trained professional.

Supported Employment: Usually describes a program that offers assistance in finding a job, training for that job, and one-on-one support at the job.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this resource guide is to provide students, parents, and other stakeholders (educators, physicians, therapists, community-based providers, business owners, etc.) with a list of relevant, high-quality, and current resources on transitions for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. The resources selected for this guide were reviewed extensively and selected as the best or most useful from the large body of information available. The criteria for selection are below.

- the information is relevant to the topic of transitions and planning
- the authors are knowledgeable, reputable, and qualified
- the information is based on fact or evidence and can be validated or confirmed
- the language used is appropriate for the intended audience
- the information is current
- the information is relatively objective and unbiased; if there is a particular bias or agenda, the authors

acknowledge it and describe why they have chosen the perspective

- the information is organized clearly so that the reader can find information easily and understand how each piece fits into the big picture

Transitions is a term used in many ways. Sometimes it is used to talk about times between activities or places. For this resource guide, transitions refers to the type of changes that happen over long periods of time (i.e., weeks, months, or years) and changes that are big in scale. Some large-scale transitions include changing from pre-school (i.e., First Steps) to school-based services, middle school to high school, and high school to community-based services. Other important transitions may include moving to another city or state. Although the details of these changes are different, the basic process to prepare for these transitions is similar.

The core components to consider when planning for large-scale transitions are:

- a place to live
- transportation
- work and adult education
- healthcare and finances
- family and friends
- recreation and leisure
- self-advocacy

Transition planning is an important strategy that can help individuals and families prepare for difficult changes. According to Osborn & Wilcox (1992), the functions of transitions planning are:

- introduces family and student to the adult service system
- determines the support needed by the student to live, work, and recreate in the community as an adult
- identifies adult service system gaps, enabling transition the team to advocate for appropriate services
- provides information to adult service providers about individual needs
- provides information critical to determining appropriate IEP goals

References

1. Osborn, K. & Wilcox, B. (1992). School to Community Transition: A Planning and Procedures Handbook for Parents and Teachers in LaPorte County. Institute for the Study of Developmental Disabilities. Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

The qualities and features of effective transitions programs and plans listed again and again in the materials reviewed for this guide are listed below:

- student-centered
- goal-driven
- outcome-oriented
- coordinated or integrated services
- innovation
- flexibility
- active participation
- shared resources, ideas, and knowledge
- partnerships
- interagency cross-training
- monitoring
- maintenance

TIPS & TERMS FOR SEARCHING

Subject headings are official words or phrases used by catalogers or indexers when organizing information. The terms listed below are subject headings that may be useful while searching in your local library or in online databases such as WorldCat. When searching for information on transitions, the simplest and most effective subject heading depends on the field of study (i.e., education, psychology, social work, etc.), although there are several helpful sub-headings which will aid in narrowing your search.

- ◇ transitions
- ◇ post-secondary transitions

- ◇ vocational rehabilitation
- ◇ supported employment
- ◇ transitional programs
- ◇ transitional classes
- ◇ Individualized Transition Plans
- ◇ vocational education
- ◇ occupational guidance
- ◇ school to work transition

PLANNING TOOLS, TIMELINES, AND GENERAL INFORMATION ON TRANSITIONS

Patterson, D. & Havill, J. (no date). Keys to Successful Transitions.

A good introduction to the issues surrounding school-based transitions. This 12 -page brochure does not answer specific questions, but provides a list of best practices and tips for parents and students.

Accessible at no cost on the web at http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cell/docs/Keys_to_Transition.pdf.

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community. (2003). A Family Guide to Transitions Planning.

This guide for parents and caregivers thoroughly describes the transition process from youth to adulthood, highlights elements of effective transition plans, and offers tips on strategies, activities, and experiences. Easy to read, the 57-page guide also provides a glossary and list of resources available across the state.

Accessible at no cost on the web at <http://www.insource.org/pdf/TRANGIDE.pdf>.

The Adolescent Health Transition Project, Washington State Department of Health/Children with Special Health Care Needs Program. (2006). Washington State Adolescent Transition Resource Notebook.

At almost 400 pages long, this notebook for families, educators, and healthcare providers provides information on almost every aspect of transitions from adolescence to adulthood. Although much of the information is specific to students in Washington state, there are many tools and checklists that are helpful to families in any location. These tools include questions to consider when considering housing, transportation, and health, skills rubrics, and a sample transition timeline.

Accessible at no cost on the web at <http://depts.washington.edu/healthtr/notebook/wholenotebook.pdf>.

Transition to Adult Life: A Shared Responsibility

This booklet for families and educators contains 4 sections focused on the key components of successful transitions. The information is broken down into key people involved, activities, and outcomes as related to the key components.

Accessible at no cost on the web at <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc/styles/cclc/defiles/trans.pdf>.

Patterson, D. & Havill, J. (no date). If I Knew Then What I Know Now: Transition Planning Through the School Years.

An easy to read, short booklet appropriate for students and families. It provides tips and recommendations for transitions from middle to high school and high school out of the school system. The information was extracted from interviews from more than 150 people who have lived through these transitions.

Accessible at no cost on the web at http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cell/docs/transition%20planning_Patterson_Havill.pdf.

A PLACE TO LIVE

Wheeler, M. (2008). Indiana Centers for Independent Living.

This brief article describes the function and services provided by the nine Independent Living Centers in Indiana. Contact information for each of the Centers is included, as well as links to other resources that may be helpful.

TRANSPORTATION

DisabilityInfo.gov. (nd). Retrieved December 1, 2008 from <http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=5420>.

The DisabilityInfo.gov website includes information about transportation resources for each state, including Indiana. The link provided above directs users to a listing of several resources and websites that have information about services available for specific areas across the state as well as the Indiana 2-1-1 phone number that provides information on a variety of services, including transportation.

American Public Transportation Association. (2003). Indiana Transit Links. Retrieved December 1, 2008 from http://www.apta.com/links/state_local/in.cfm.

This site lists transit agencies for specific cities or metropolitan areas, as well as providing a list of transit agencies by county. The information provided is simply a link to that agency's website.

EMPLOYMENT & ADULT EDUCATION

Center on Community Living & Careers, Indiana Institute on Disability & Community & Bartholomew County Transition Council. (2006). A Roadmap to Choosing an Employment Agency. Bloomington, IN: Indiana Resource Center for Autism.

A easy to use and interactive questionnaire for individuals to select an employment agency. This 19-page roadmap provides questions that will guide students and their families in choosing the most appropriate agency. While questions are suggested, guidelines for evaluating answers are not provided.

Accessible at no cost on the web at <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc/styles/cclc/defiles/ChooseEAgency.pdf>.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2007). Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

A brief article (6 p.) for potential college students presented in a question and answer format. Although the language may not be appropriate for all students with disabilities, it is appropriate for most adult caregivers.

Accessible at no cost on the web at <http://www.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>.

Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs. (2008). College and Post-Secondary Services for Persons with Disabilities in Indiana 2008-2009. Bloomington, IN: Indiana Resource Center for Autism.

A 15-page report that lists each college and university in the state, along with information about special programming and services available to students with disabilities. The range of services offered includes accessibility, tutoring, alternative testing, advocacy, advising, adaptive technology, and other alternative resources. Contact information is also provided.

Accessible at no cost on the web at <http://www.doe.in.gov/exceptional/speced/docs/2008-09CollegeSurvey.pdf>.

Wheeler, M. (2008). Vocational rehabilitation services. Bloomington, IN: Indiana Resource Center for Autism.

A regularly updated article on the IRCA website, this 3-page summary describes the services available in Indiana, how individuals can access these services, who is eligible, and provides contact information for the VRS offices across the state.

Accessible at no cost on the web at <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/adultoptions/VocRehab.html>.

HEALTHCARE & FINANCES

Center for Youth & Adults with Conditions of Childhood. (2007). Healthcare Financing Options When You Turn 18.

A 2-page handout that summarizes private and public health insurance options and basic criteria for residents of Indiana. Contact information for these programs is provided.

Please contact the Center for Youth and Adults with Conditions of Childhood at 317-278-0061 or 1-866-551-0093 for a copy of this resource.

RECREATION & LEISURE

The leisure interests and needs for an individual with a disability are highly unique and may be affected by his/her disability. However, there are resources and activities that exist in many communities. Some examples of resources that may be available in your community are:

- nearest regional office of Division of Disability & Rehabilitative Resources (<http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2759.htm>)
- your public library
- support groups for specific disabilities/disorders (i.e., Autism Spectrum Disorders, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, etc.)
- Easter Seals Crossroads
- ARC of Indiana (<http://www.arcind.org/>)
- INSource - Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs (<http://www.insource.org/>)

ADVOCACY & SELF-ADVOCACY

North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation. (nd). Dispelling Myths about People with Disabilities.

This 2-page handout lists several assumptions commonly made about people with disabilities of all types along with facts from the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor that challenge those myths.

Accessible at no cost on the web at <http://cwd.aphsa.org/statetostate/docs/State%20Outreach%20Activities/North%20Carolina/NC,%20VR%20Myths%20about%20People%20with%20Disabilities.pdf>.

North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation. (nd). Attitudinal Barriers.

This 2-page handout describes some of the barriers faced by people with disabilities that are caused by others' attitudes.

Accessible at no cost on the web at <http://dvr.dhhs.state.nc.us/dvr/pubs/Attitudes.pdf>.

North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation. (nd). Communicating With and About People with Disabilities.

This 2-page handout provides examples of words and phrases that can help people communicate with or about people who have disabilities without offending or insulting them. Additionally, ten rules of etiquette are provided that support the dignity and humanity of individuals with disabilities.

Accessible at no cost on the web at <http://cwd.aphsa.org/statetostate/docs/State%20Outreach%20Activities/North%20Carolina/NC,%20VR%20Communicating%20Tips.pdf>.