

Transition to Adulthood.

This transition process can be unique for each individual and may require collaboration with family, educators, and community services. It's important to ensure the transition plan is person-centered and focused on the individual's goals and aspirations, by following these steps, individuals with disabilities can have a smoother transition to independent living, helping them achieve their personal goals and lead fulfilling lives in North Carolina.

- 1. Start Early.** Begin planning for transition during the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, ideally starting at age 14, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Set specific goals for post-secondary education, employment, and independent living.
- 2. Assess Strengths and Needs.** Conduct assessments to identify the individual's strengths, preferences, and areas of need. This can include evaluations for vocational skills, social skills, and everyday living skills.
- 3. Develop an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP).** Create a comprehensive ITP as part of the IEP that outlines goals for education, employment, and independent living. The ITP should include specific strategies to achieve these goals.
Transition Services: Include services that help students develop skills needed for independence, such as daily living skills, job readiness, and social skills training.
- 4. Engage in Vocational Training.** Explore vocational training programs and internships that provide hands-on experience in potential career fields. North Carolina offers various vocational rehabilitation programs through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS).
- 5. Explore Post-Secondary Education Options**
Post-Secondary Education: Research colleges, vocational schools, and training programs that support students with disabilities. Many institutions offer accommodations and specialized programs. Ensure that the student understands the accommodations and supports available.
Community Colleges: North Carolina community colleges often have programs specifically designed for students with disabilities.
- 6. Participate in Life Skills Training.** Offer opportunities for life skills training that covers cooking, budgeting, personal care, and transportation. Local organizations and community colleges may provide these courses.
- 7. Explore Employment Services.** Utilize resources such as the Job Link Career Center and providers of Supported Employment services to find job placements and training programs.
Job Coaching and Internships: Identify job coaching services and internship opportunities. Organizations like Vocational Rehabilitation Services can assist with job searches, training, and placement.
Soft Skills Training: Focus on developing soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are crucial for workplace success.
- 8. Develop Social Skills and Networks.** Encourage participation in social activities and peer groups to help develop social skills and build a support network.
Independent Living Skills Training: Seek programs that teach essential life skills, including budgeting, cooking, personal care, and time management.
Self-Advocacy: Encourage the individual to practice self-advocacy skills and gradually increase opportunities for independence in daily living activities. Practice decision-making skills and encourage self-advocacy. This includes learning how to express needs, make choices, and seek assistance when necessary. Local advocacy groups can provide opportunities for networking and socialization.

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9. **Plan for Healthcare and Benefits.** Discuss providers for adults and healthcare coverage options, including Medicaid and Medicare, and ensure that the individual is aware of their rights and benefits. Consult with a professional to aid in understanding Social Security Disability benefits if applicable.
10. **Financial Planning:**
Benefits Awareness: Inform about various benefits available, such as Social Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, or other assistance programs.
Budgeting Skills: Teach budgeting and financial management skills to promote responsible money management.
11. **Housing Options:**
Explore Housing Resources: Investigate independent living options, supportive housing, or group homes that can provide a suitable environment for living independently.
Housing Authorities: Contact local housing authorities or agencies specializing in accessible housing to find options that meet the individual's needs.
12. **Networking and Community Involvement:**
Peer Support Groups: Encourage participation in local or online support groups for young adults with disabilities. This promotes social connections and shared experiences.
Community Engagement: Involve the individual in community activities, volunteering, or interest-based groups to enhance social skills and create routines.
13. **Engage Family Support.** Involve family members in the planning and transition process, providing them with resources and information to support their loved ones.
14. **Continual Support, Review and Adjust Plans Regularly.** Continuously review the transition plan and make necessary adjustments based on the individual's progress, changing needs, and new opportunities.
Regular Check-Ins: Maintain regular communication with the individual to monitor progress and address any challenges that arise.
Long-term Planning: Continue to revisit and update the transition plan as goals and needs evolve.
15. **Legal and Advocacy Support:**
Know Rights: Ensure the individual understands their rights regarding education, employment, and access to services under laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
Advocates: Consider working with a legal advocate or consultant who specializes in disability rights to assist with navigating the transition process.
16. **Access to Resources and Support:** Identify and connect with local agencies and organizations that provide support for individuals with disabilities. Resources such as the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services can be beneficial.
Community Resources: Connect with local organizations that provide support for individuals with disabilities, such as the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) and disability advocacy groups.
Durable Medical Equipment and Assistive Technology: Explore resources for obtaining necessary equipment or technology that aids in daily living.
North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS): Offers services to assist individuals with disabilities in achieving employment and independence.
NC Department of Public Instruction: Provides information about special education and transition services.
Local advocacy organizations: Organizations like Disability Rights North Carolina can provide guidance and advocacy for individuals transitioning to adulthood.

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