

Transition: Planning for the Future

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What is Transition?

- It is a process of planning and actively working with children to help them develop life skills and provide real life experiences to make it more likely they will become happy, successful, contributing members of society.
- The term transition applies to post high school goals, and includes the many years of planning and working toward meaningful goals.
- Financial planning for the future is a huge part of transition planning.

Financial Planning

- Able account
ABLE Accounts are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families.
- Special Needs trust
instead of leaving property directly to your loved one with a disability that would disqualify them from receiving Medicaid and SSI benefits, you leave it to the special needs trust. You also choose someone to serve as trustee.

Medicaid Waivers

(Katie Beckett Waivers)

- Waivers allow states to use Medicaid funds for long-term home and community-based services for people with disabilities or special health-care needs and the elderly in order to help them live in the community.
- They are named “waivers” because certain Medicaid requirements are waived (meaning they don’t apply). For example, family income. All but 1 waiver is based on just the child’s income and certain licensing requirements for service providers. Your child’s income means any money that they personally have in assets, earn, or are paid – not your whole family’s income.
- Besides getting these additional services, people who receive waiver long-term services and supports also get full Medicaid health-care benefits. This is a huge help for children who have complicated medical needs and no other health insurance.

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- HCS, the main Medicaid waiver, The 1915(c) **waiver** is known as the “home and community-based services **waiver**” (HCBS) because it allows states to treat certain **Medicaid** populations in home or other community based settings rather than in institutional or long-term care facilities such as hospitals or nursing homes.
- Each state has created other Medicaid Waivers to leverage Medicaid funds to serve individuals with disabilities in the community.

Microboards

- family and friends of a person with an intellectual or developmental disability retain control of the most important decisions affecting their loved one's life goals. Microboards were first developed in Canada in the 1980s by [David and Faye Wetherow](#). Today, the [Pennsylvania Microboard Association](#) states that more than 400 U.S.-based microboards exist in 20 states. The [Texas Microboard Collaboration](#), a project of The Arc of Texas, defines a microboard as “a small group of committed family and friends who join together with an individual with a disability to create a non-profit organization.” Microboards are governed by a board of directors, which includes 5 to 7 family members and friends that have an interest in the wellbeing of the individual with special needs.
- <http://childrenandthelawblog.com/microboards-how-they-can-help-kids-with-special-needs>

It is never too early to begin transition planning

- Elementary age students:
- Involve your child in social activities so the child obtains experiences in learning to socialize with others who are his or her own age.
- Seek inclusion. Consider very carefully the type of schooling your child should receive. Make sure he or she is included as much as possible in the regular school activities.
- Expect your child to participate in home, school and outside activities.
- Teach your child life skills, such as cooking, grooming, and money management.

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- Middle School Age:
- Begin to help your child understand sexual development as a part of growing up.
- Make your child aware of safety issues. Teach your child how to protect him or herself from harm and how to avoid dangerous situations.
- Teach your child whom to call or what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Teach your child about his or her disability, how to advocate for himself or herself, and allow your child to participate in the IEP process when appropriate.

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- High School Age:
- Functional (life skills) vs. Academic: Give thought to how much school time should be spent developing functional skills versus the time spent on academic skills.
- Encourage your child to work, whether it is volunteer or paid employment.
- Teach your child to use public transportation to get around independently in the community.
- Consider the type of program your child will pursue. When will he or she graduate? Does he or she need community based training, etc.?
- Begin formal transition planning through the IEP in school to help your child be successful in the adult world.

School Transition Planning

- IDEA law dictates that by age 16 student with an IEP receiving special education should have a transition planning meeting.
- Who should attend this meeting
- What needs to be discussed at the meeting
- What should be the outcome of this meeting

What Needs to Happen at School

- The schools needs to give written notice to parents in advance regarding the meeting.
- A projected four-year plan of the courses the student will take to meet transitional needs and graduation requirements will be included in the IEP.
- School personnel are obligated to invite a representative of any agency who is likely to pay for future transition services to attend IEP meetings for students who will need adult services after graduation.
- Who should be involved in a Transition Planning meeting?
- Parents
- The Student (directly or indirectly)
- Special Educator
- Administrator
- Regular educator
- Any other person from any outside agency that is indicated to help with future plan for transition.

What should the Transition Plan Consider?

- Should reflect high but realistic expectations
- Should reflect a “forward movement” instead of a “dead-end” approach
- Can be “mixed” considering the student’s stamina, endurance and ability level
- Can incorporate external supports
- May initially be less specific, increasing in detail as the student approaches graduation
- May change from year to year, sometimes slightly, sometimes drastically

What the plan needs to consider

- What are needs/challenges preventing the young adult from working outside the home?
- Who can provide education/training to assist the young adult?
- What can the young adult accomplish without assistance?
- What else could the young adult accomplish if assistance were provided by a job coach, habilitation training specialist (HTS), or other caregiver?

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- Identify peer mentors and collaborate with other families who have youth with similar significant disabilities.
- Provide needed resources.
- Planning for the future takes a team!
- Invite others to be on your team!
- *ENCOURAGE THE DREAM!*

What should parents look for in a quality transition plan?

- Age appropriateness
- Activities that are community referenced
- Functional skills: displaying good work habits, communicating needs, making decisions, and managing money, etc.
- Skills that can be generalized
- Activities that are based on the individual's preferences and interests, desired post-school goals, present abilities as they relate to transition goals.

Resources

- <http://www.ablenrc.org/about/what-are-able-accounts>
- <http://www.thearc.org/what-we-do/public-policy/issues/able-program-implementation>
- <http://medicaidwaiver.org/>
- https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/section-1115-demo/demonstration-and-waiver-list/waivers_faceted.html
- <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/transition-planning-for-students-with-ieps/>
- <http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=423>