

# TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD CHECKLIST

## A Guide for Parents of Young People with Disabilities

### STARTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

**Talk About Work.** Share your expectations of future education and employment. Talk about what work is and different kinds of jobs and work opportunities. Ask questions about your child's interests, dreams and career ideas. Encourage youth to learn about different careers by job shadowing parents, family and friends.

**Find opportunities to help out around the house.** Have your child help with chores around the house and take part in neighborhood jobs, like delivering newspapers and mowing lawns. This will help instill self-confidence and teach them about money and budgeting.

**Promote skill building and independence.** Self-advocacy skills can be taught by giving youth choices, like what to wear or how to spend allowance money. Daily living skills, such as good hygiene and learning how to prepare meals are important skills that can be taught at a young age.

**Help your child have a voice.** Effective communication and self-advocacy skills are essential and will serve your child well throughout their life. These include being sure your child understands their disability and strengths and what accommodations and supports will be needed for them to be successful as an adult.

**Apply for the DD Waiver.** DDSD's vision is for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live the lives they prefer in their communities. With that said, we encourage individuals with intellectual and development disabilities or their families and guardians to apply for Home and Community Based Services for themselves or their loved ones at the earliest possible age. Please visit [www.nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/intake/](http://www.nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/intake/) to find out how to apply and who qualifies for services or call us at 505-350-0034.

## STARTING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Examine interests, skills and preferences, based on work and volunteer experience.**

**Learn about education and training requirements in area of career interest.**

**Seek out volunteer opportunities.** Your child will learn new job skills and expand their network by volunteering for organizations that appeal to their interests. Don't forget to ask for letters of reference!

**By age 14:** DVR staff should attend IEP meetings starting at age 14. Remember to include your child at the IEP meeting to talk about his or her career goals.

## STARTING IN HIGH SCHOOL

**Find work-based experiences** through an after school/ summer job and/or an internship.

**Develop a career portfolio**, including a resume and letters of reference.

**Develop transportation plans** for getting to and from college and/or work.

**Explore independent or supported living options**, as appropriate.

**By age 16:**

- Set IEP post-secondary goals. These should include future education, training, employment and independent living goals.
- Begin the DVR employment process at least 2 years before graduation. Having documentation of the disability and knowing what the career goal is will help move things along.
- Begin thinking about which of the three New Mexico graduation options is appropriate for your student: the standard graduation option, the modified graduation option, or the ability graduation option.
- Begin thinking about whether a certificate of transition, which is for students who have completed 4 years of high school but need more time to work on transition goals and objectives, would be appropriate for your child. With this certificate, special education services may continue until the end of the school year in which your student will turn 22.

## ONE YEAR BEFORE LEAVING SCHOOL

If your child plans to attend college, apply to the college and contact the college's Disability Resource Center to set up accommodations.

**Before age 18:** Prepare paperwork to apply for guardianship or conservatorship if necessary, and explore alternatives to guardianship that may meet your child's needs.

- Make plans to transition your child's primary care provider from a pediatrician to an adult physician.
- Add your child's name to residential placement wait lists, if needed.

### At age 18:

- Apply for SSI
- Apply for Medicaid. If not eligible for Medicaid, look into health insurance options for when your child will no longer be covered by the parent's/guardian's plan or by a college health plan
- Register to vote

## WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY ABOUT SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION?

Higher levels of communication, self-feeding, self-dressing, ability to get to places, household responsibilities and participation in community activities are associated with higher rates of competitive employment.

High parental expectations of employment and work experience while in high school are the top two predictors of post high school success.

Career awareness training, computer skills, a high school job, participating in either a post-secondary vocational school or 4-year college/university program, are all positive predictors of competitive employment.