

Planning for Adulthood

a transition guide
in support of **students with special needs**



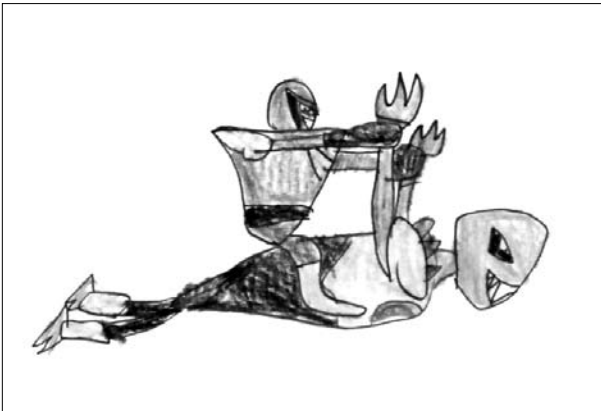
Introduction

Moving into adulthood is both exciting and challenging. As you explore new opportunities, places and relationships you will be in transition. This means you will experience changes in your life and be adjusting to being an adult. You and your family will need to make many decisions about your future, including choices about where you are going to live, what kind of job you will have and what you will do with your free time.

Decisions about your future can be tough to make but planning ahead will help. The transition planning process can begin when you are as young as 14 years of age. Starting early allows time to create a Transition Plan that will help you face the challenges of becoming an adult and make your dreams come true.

At the beginning of the process your goals and dreams may not be clear – that’s okay.

This Transition Guide provides students and families with an outline of the transition process and the resources available for students as they move from high school to adulthood. These steps start while the student is still in high school.



What is Transition Planning?

Transition planning involves looking ahead and planning for your future. While you are still in school you can prepare for the opportunities and experiences of being an adult.

Transition planning involves you, your family, your local service providers, school personnel and government staff who support youth transitioning to adulthood.

When you build your plan, it is helpful to list your goals and dreams. Not all students will have identified goals initially, but the transition process will help. Developing a Transition Plan can be fun and exciting. Your partnership with your team will help you get ready for the challenges and privileges of being an adult and make your transition a success.

Transition planning can help you:

- find a job
- explore living arrangements
- get involved in your community, and
- possibly continue your education.

Transition planning gives you:

- help to determine the steps needed to prepare for high school and graduation
- a chance to review your accomplishments
- an opportunity to create a vision for your future
- help to explore options and make informed decisions
- help so that you can be successful in your life as an adult.

Steps to a Successful Transition Plan

Here are the five steps to help you develop a successful Transition Plan. This plan will guide your transition to adult life.

- Step 1 Build Your Transition Planning Team
- Step 2 Gather Information
- Step 3 Document Your Transition Plan
- Step 4 Put Your Plan Into Action
- Step 5 Hold a Leaving High School Meeting

Your plan will be unique to you. Actively participating in the discussions and decisions will make sure that it reflects who you are and what you want for your future. This also means you are responsible for completing the steps and achieving the goals you've set in your Transition Plan.



STEP 1: Build Your Transition Planning Team

Building your transition planning team is the first step in achieving your future dreams. Your transition team will change over time, and members of the team will change over time depending on your decisions, and your age and where you are in your development. You and your family are responsible to pick the most appropriate people to be on your transition planning team.

Some key participants in planning for your future may include:

- You
- Your family
- School personnel, for example:
 - Career facilitator
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Physiotherapist
 - School Psychologist
 - Teachers
 - Counsellors
 - Administrator(s)
 - Educational Assistant(s)
- Social workers
- Service agencies for adults
- Current service providers
- Community members
- Community Living BC (CLBC) Facilitator
- Your friends

What do my team members do?

Assigning roles and responsibilities to your team members is an important part of making your team successful.

You play a key role on the team and you are responsible for sharing your interests and goals with the team, asking questions of them and working towards your goals.

School personnel and other community members (example: social workers, therapists) can assist you in planning for your transition. They can give you feedback on your school and work performance. They can also

tell you about possible training opportunities and other resources that may interest you.

Choosing a Transition Coordinator

You and your team will want to choose one person who will oversee your transition. Some teams may call this person a transitions coordinator.¹ You will need to work with this person closely during the planning process and after high school as you transition to your adult life.

This role can be filled by a variety of individuals, including your parent or caregiver. It might be an aunt or uncle, or a close family friend who has known you for a long time and will continue to be involved in your life.

The duties of the transition coordinator may include:

- organizing meetings
- managing meetings
- monitoring progress of your transition plan

You and your team will want to choose one person who will act as your transition coordinator. This role can be filled by a variety of individuals, including you or your parent or guardian. The transition coordinator will organize meetings, manage the paper work (example: collect assessment reports, record your Transition Plan) and monitor the progress of your Transition Plan.

¹If you are preparing a Transition Plan using the IEP process at school, a school-based employee usually takes on the role of transition coordinator. Remember, you and your family are still encouraged to actively participate throughout the planning process.

You may also choose to develop a Transition Plan outside of school. In this case you, a member of your family or another member of your transition team can act as the transition coordinator.

STEP 2: Gather Information

Transition planning tools are ways that we can gather information about you to help you and your team to build your plan. As you work through this section with various members of your team, you will get to know your strengths, your goals, and your dreams. We will also learn about your unique needs and other important information needed to build your plan.

Here are some things we might find out about you to help build your unique Transition Plan:

- What do you like and dislike?
- What are your strengths and interests?
- What are your hopes, goals and dreams?
- Do you have any special accomplishments or skills?
- Who are the important people in your life?
- What services or supports do you currently use?
- What services and supports do you need?
- How do you communicate with people?
- What health and medical needs are to be addressed?
- Do you need special equipment?
- What supports do you need to access your environment?
- What is needed for community access?

Your teacher, and the members of your planning team will have suggestions about what tools to use and information needs to be gathered.

The following suggested tools are included in the Planning for Adulthood Transition Workbook:

Personal Profile

Your personal profile describes who you are. It gives you a chance to talk about your interests, abilities, and preferences.

Family Profile

A family profile describes both what a family needs and what they have to contribute during the time their son or daughter makes the transition to adulthood.

Circle of Support

The Circle of Support will give you a quick picture of who is in your life. It helps to get clear about who is involved in certain activities in your life, and shows which circles need to be filled.

Mapping My Dreams

Dreams do not have to be realistic. But beginning to put your dreams into words is hard work. It may take some real thinking on your part. Once you have talked about your dreams, this tool brings you back to where you are today, and allows you to create goals that are meaningful.

Functional Inventory

You will probably work with a parent, teacher or other adult to complete this inventory. It will show where you are most independent already. It will also help to identify what kinds of assistance you will require as an adult, areas of your life you are not satisfied with and what you want to work on.

Identify Your Goals

After each information gathering tool is complete, you will be ready to think about your personal goals. Some of your goals may relate to now, some may be for a year from now, and other goals for five years from now. Write them down, whether they are for now or later. Be sure to talk about these goals at your transition planning meeting. These goals are a very important part of your plan.

There is a worksheet in the transition workbook to help you identify and set your goals.

Setting Your Goals

Once you and your family have created profiles, you can start to discuss your hopes and dreams for the future with them.

A goal is something specific that you want to accomplish within a certain period of time. Writing your goals down will help you be clear and specific. It is also useful to think of goals that are short term (take six months to one year to complete) and long term (take one to five years to complete).

STEP 3: Document Your Transition Plan

Developing your Transition Plan involves talking with your team and doing some creative thinking before writing your plan down. Your written Transition Plan will outline the tasks that must be completed to reach your goals. It will also state who is responsible for completing each task and when it should be done.

Your plan can also list the services and supports you use now and those you will need to make your transition to adulthood successful.

A checklist can also help you keep on track with your plan as you get older and make the transition to adult life. As you move towards your life as an adult, certain tasks can be done at different times. Some can be done when you are as young as 14 years of age, others can wait until you are older.

In the transition workbook, you'll find a task checklist which lists some of these and suggests at what age you might want to do them. Some of the tasks may not apply to you, but many of them will. This list includes tasks that will help you plan for your transition, participate in your planning sessions, access various programs and services, and put your plan into action.

This checklist includes some tasks that may not be included in your individual Transition Plan, but may help make your transition to adulthood easier. Look these tasks over and decide which ones apply to you. Then work with your family and your transition coordinator to track your progress by checking each task off when it is done.

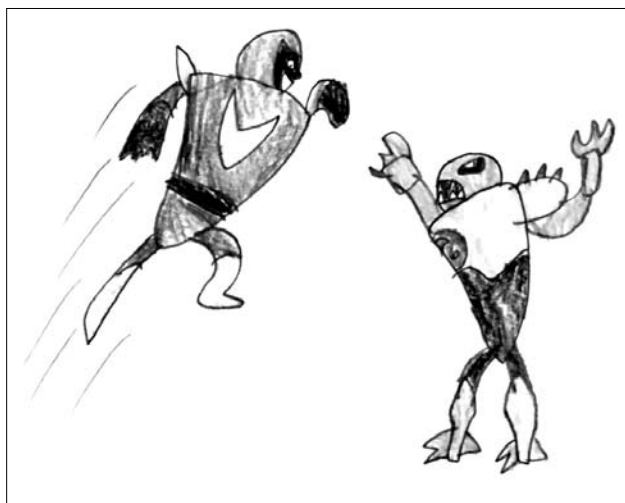
STEP 4: Put Your Plan Into Action

To put your Transition Plan into action, you and your team need to meet at least once a year to:

- decide who will do each task.
- how they will do them.
- when they should be done by.
- continue to monitor progress.

As you and your team work on your plan, it is important to:

- review and update your plan, including personal goals
- keep track of how everyone is doing
- adjust the plan if anything changes
- plan meetings according to need and critical time periods
- review roles and responsibilities of team members, and identify who is the transition coordinator, as this may change from year to year.



STEP 5: Hold a Leaving High School Meeting

The transition team will arrange a meeting that should happen around the time you are nearing the end of high school. At this meeting:

- review the checklist
- If any of your goals have not been met, then your team will talk about them and about what to do next
- review successes
- review team membership
- explore the options
- explore a new plan for adulthood
- set another meeting time to review your new plan and next steps.

By this time you will be well on your way to making the adult life you have dreamed of a reality.



Task Checklist

Plan & Prepare:

Age 14 - 15
(Grade 9 & 10)

(Need to do)

Gather information and documents.

1. Obtain a birth certificate and/or proof of citizenship.
2. Apply for a Social Insurance Number.
3. Open a bank account.

Explore career opportunities.

1. Grade 10 Planning
2. Pre-employment skills

(Need to do)

Gather information and documents.

1. Be involved in Individual Education Plans.
2. Build your planning team.

Explore career opportunities.

1. Work Experience / Co-Op
2. Explore college options.

Community.

1. Apply for BCID or driver's licence.

(May need to do)

1. Apply for Persons with a Disability benefits (age 17.5)
2. Complete assessments – if needed.
3. Make community visits – day programs if appropriate.
4. Determine which CLBC services are available if appropriate.

(Need to do)

Evaluate Plan.

1. On track or not?
2. Eligible for Grade 13?

Explore career opportunities.

1. Review skills, interests and physical abilities.
2. Portfolio of work and volunteer experience.

Community.

1. Establish recreational, social and cultural opportunities.

(May need to do)

1. Verification of a permanent disability (re: post secondary)
2. Establish eligibility for CLBC.
3. Establish eligibility for Home and Community Care.
4. Evaluate transportation needs.
5. Question adult guardianship.
6. Fill out representation agreements.
7. Apply for bus passes and relevant disability discount cards.
8. Apply for Health Services Community Living – if eligible for CLBC and have health care needs.

(Need to do)

1. Re-evaluate plan.
2. Develop financial plan.
3. Pursue your interests.
4. Advocacy.

(May need to do)

1. Transition planning tools (see page 9 to find out more about these tools)

Note: For further information on forms check elaborated checklist, and the list of contact information in the transition workbook resource guide.

Participate in Your Planning Session & Access Programs & Services:

Age 16 - 17
(Grade 11 & 12)

Put Your Plan in Place:

Age 18
(Grade 12)

Ongoing Planning:

Age 19 and beyond

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For more information,
contact Student Services
at (250) 286-4400.