

# What's After High School?

Almost Everything You Need to Know  
about the Transition to Adult Life for  
Youth with Disabilities



Each family has a voice.  
Together, our voices will be heard.

2024



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**Family Voices supports families who have children with disabilities and special health care needs. We empower families to navigate health care and community support and services.**

**As a family-run organization, we guide families on their own leadership and advocacy journeys. We promote family-centered care and family/professional partnerships.**

**Visit our website to view our fact sheets, newsletters and online learning.**

Overview and  
Getting Started

Living and  
Working in the  
Community

Decision-Making

Education



Long-Term  
Supports and  
Health Care

# Transition Touches Every Part of Life

- Individual Child
  - Building self-determination and self-advocacy; daily-living skills; social skills; dreaming and imagining, checking out new and different experiences
- School
  - Transition IEP and planning for life after high school
- Health Care
  - Insurance and providers
- Public Benefits
  - SSI, DVR, Medicaid, Long-Term Support Waivers
- Community
  - Volunteering, trial work experiences, social life, recreation, fun stuff

# Getting Started

- How old is your child?
  - This will help you think about where to begin
- Talk with your child about:
  - Their dreams and interests
  - Their likes and dislikes
  - Things they do well and things that are difficult
- Is your child's IEP addressing transition goals?
  - Skill development, including social skills
  - Building on interests
  - Planning for what to do after high school
  - Self-determination, advocacy, community connections
- Have a notebook (electronic or print) to stay organized
- Track important dates (we talk about this next)

# Dates to Remember

## AGES 14 - 21

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires transition activities to start at age 16 (age 14 in Wisconsin)
- Services end school year youth turns 21

## AGE 17 ½

- Connect with Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
  - Access to Disability Benefits Specialists
  - Public benefits, assistance, referrals and support

## AGE 18

- Legal changes
  - Responsible for all actions and decisions
  - End of parent rights and decision making
  - Supported-Decision Making options
- Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) after 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
  - Cash benefit and access to Medicaid
- Register to vote
- Register with Selective Service (males)

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# Decision Making

With legal status changes at age 18, youth may need assistance making informed decisions

- This is sometimes called “supported-decision making”
- There are multiple tools that can be used, including:
  - Supported Decision Making Agreements
    - Family Voices Supported Decision Making Training
    - BPDD Supported Decision Making Toolkit
  - Powers of Attorney
  - Guardianship
- Supported-decision making builds on choice-making opportunities youth have had throughout their childhood
  - It's never too late to start
  - Family Voices "Early Choices Matter" toolkit

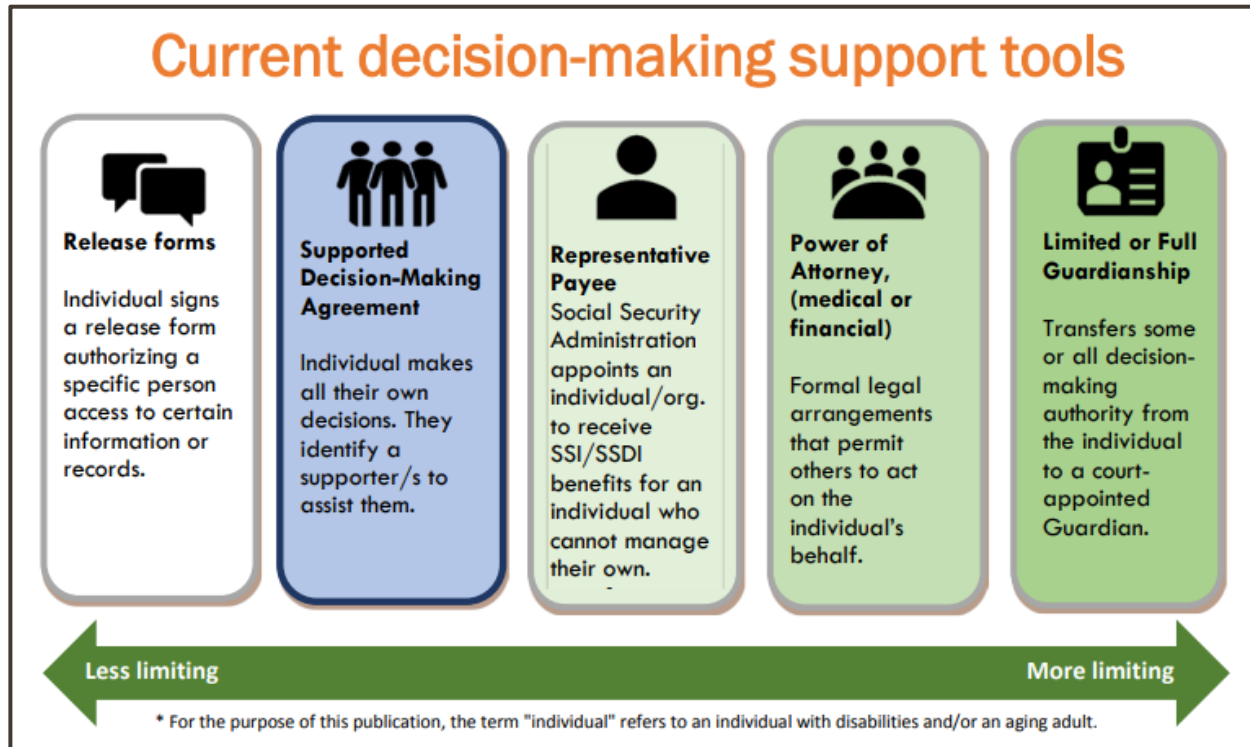


# Informed Decisions

Our laws presume people are competent to make their own decisions

- Making an “informed” decision means:
  - Understanding information needed to make decisions
  - Understanding the outcomes and consequences of decisions
  - Having a way of expressing your decisions
- It does **not** mean:
  - The decision is what others, including parents, would choose or approve

# Decision Making is a Continuum



Courtesy of Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities, "Supported-Decision Making Toolkit"

Person remains "the decider"

- Release of information/consent
- Supported Decision-Making Agreements

Someone else is "the decider"

- Power of Attorney (POA)
- Guardianship

Financial Safeguards

- Social Security Representative Payee
- Joint checking/savings accounts
- Limits on debit cards

# How Do I Know Which Option is Best for My Youth?

- Talk with your youth about their preferences for assistance with decision making
- Talk with other families about the choices they made
- Keep learning about the different tools to help with decision making
- If unsure, start with the **least restrictive tools first**
- At the very least, have your youth sign a **Release of Information** at the bank, school and the doctor's offices so they can share information with you after they turn 18
- Most importantly...**TAKE YOUR TIME** so an informed choice is made

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# Paying for Health Care

## Private Insurance

- Affordable Care Act (ACA)
  - Coverage on a parent's plan up to age 26
  - Marketplace options
- Employer or University Coverage
- Disabled Dependent Provision
  - Some private plans, allows a child with a disability to stay on parent's plan as long as parent has that plan

## Public Insurance

- Medicaid: BadgerCare, SSI and Long-Term Support
- Medicare: SSDI
- MAPP (Medicaid Purchase Plan): Buy into Medicaid for those with disabilities and higher income and assets
  - 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and assets under \$15,000

# Long-Term Support Programs: Medicaid Benefit

## Medicaid Home and Community Based Waivers

- Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS)
- Family Care (managed care) or IRIS (self-directed)
- Supports
  - Living, working and playing in the community
  - Personal care and activities of daily living
- Based on Individual Outcomes
  - How do I want to spend my days?
  - Where and with whom do I want to live?
  - What do I want to do for fun?
- Need to apply (or reapply)
  - Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)
  - CLTS Support and Service Coordinator and ADRC
  - Based on "functional screen" and financial need
  - ADRC offers "options counseling" and benefits specialists

# Health Care Providers

## Transition from pediatric to adult health care providers

- Primary care
- Specialists
- Different hospital
- Dentists and eye doctors too

## Portable medical information including:

- Emergency plans
- Medical summary
- Medical alert bracelets or other tools

# Health Care: Skill Building

## Increased Independence

- Understanding and talking about disability/health needs
- Filling prescriptions and making appointments
- Directing caregivers and expressing needs
- Using technology
- Asking for information in a way they can understand

## Role Playing Examples

- What would you tell a new doctor about yourself?
- How would you tell the doctor that you're not feeling well?
- If you choose to talk about your disability, what would you say?



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# Public High School IEP

## IEP Transition planning begins at age 14

- IEP requires a Postsecondary Transition Plan (PTP)
  - PTP is federally mandated for all public schools
- Transfer of rights from parent to student at age 18
  - Release of information to parents
  - Decision making options
- Identify objectives for life after high school
  - Advocate for community-based opportunities
  - Extra-curricular, social and recreational opportunities
  - Daily living skills for independence
- Course selection
  - May depend on what diploma youth will get

# Public High School Transition Programs

## Continuing high school after senior year

- Transition programs for 18 to 21-year-old students
- Participate in graduation with peers
- Special education ends with diploma or certificate of completion
- If there are still unmet IEP goals, what can occur after 12<sup>th</sup> grade?
  - Taking a college class
  - Exploring different jobs
  - Job Shadowing
  - Volunteering in the community
  - Life skills training
  - Social opportunities
  - Learning about and using transportation

# Homeschool and Private Schools

## Applies to Anyone of Transition Age with No IEP

Transition planning must be initiated by the family

- Parents can start working on transition and independence-building activities anytime
  - Important for these families to be working on building early choice-making skills
- **Proactively** call DVR to get connected to pre-vocational programs

## Social Networks

- Interesting field trips and gatherings with local homeschool co-ops
- Library activity clubs
- Some public school after-school programs

# How DVR Works for Youth in Transition

## The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR) in the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

- Starts when youth is 16, but usually begins when student has one to two years left of high school
- DVR counselor can participate in IEP meetings
- Supports people throughout their lifetime as needed
- Provide support for:
  - Career guidance and counseling
  - Interest inventory
  - Skills assessment and development
  - Work incentives benefits counseling
  - Job search and placement assistance
  - Additional training and education after high school
  - Support to keep jobs
  - Individualized supports related to jobs

# Post Secondary Education

IDEA does not apply to colleges, universities or technical schools

- Colleges and technical schools have offices for disability services
- Need to have a disability determination that is acceptable to the school to get accommodations
- **Student needs to seek out services or accommodations**
  - Accommodations may include tutors, extended test times, note takers and assistive technology

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# Working in the Community

## Integrated Employment

- Competitive employment
- Supported employment
- Self-employment

## Segregated Employment

- Workshop employment for sub-minimum wages

## Day Services

- Community-based or facility-based
- Can serve as “wrap-around” support for part-time workers who need full-day support

- ★ Jobs can be full-time or part-time
- ★ Mix and match jobs



# Supports for Integrated Employment

DVR plus Family Care or IRIS

Vocational agencies

- Job developers – finding jobs
- Job coaches – support on the job
- Adaptive equipment – assist to do job
- Trial job experiences
- Transportation to and from work
- Workplace personal assistance

Work Incentives Offered Through Social Security

Work Incentives Benefits Counselors

# Living in the Community

Will my adult child continue to live at home or move out?

- Learn What's Available in Your Community:
- Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- Family Care case manager or IRIS consultant
- Independent Living Centers
- Disability-specific Organizations
- Talk with other families

An individual and family decision

# Housing and Residential Options

## Community Supported Living: individual hires supporters

- Owning or renting a house or an apartment
- Roommates or living alone
- Supports can be a few times a week or 24/7
- Use of technology to support independence (alerts, scheduling apps)
- Use of public assistance (Foodshare, Home Energy Assistance, Section 8/Section 42 subsidized housing, home purchase incentives)

## Regulated Settings: agency-owned, managed and staffed

- Adult family homes/group homes
- Residential Care Apartment Complexes (RCACs)
- Community-based Residential Facilities (CBRFs)

# Participating in Community Life

## Community Participation: What does this mean?

- Friendships and social connections
- Things to do for fun and recreation
- Voting and political advocacy
- Building community networks
  - Volunteering
  - Religious/Spiritual opportunities
- Stretching oneself to continue to build on self-advocacy, self-determination, social and independence skills

# NEXT STEPS

Which piece will you take on first?

Which partners will you bring on to help you?

What information will you need?

What's After High School?  
Evaluation



Thank You!

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