

THINGS ARE ABOUT TO CHANGE

YOUTH TRANSITION **TOOLKIT** PARENTS' GUIDE **EDUCATION**

All students applying to traditional degree programs are held to the same academic standards and procedures. While more and more colleges are accommodating students with disabilities, they are not covered by IDEA, therefore, students with disabilities are not “entitled” to the services and support they get in high school. Instead, they must demonstrate that they are eligible for certain services and support. While a student with disabilities still has certain rights, as outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, there are limits to what colleges are required to provide and adjust. However, programs do exist to help students with disabilities get accommodations and services to assist them to succeed in higher education.

Some services such as transportation from home to school and assistance with using the restroom or eating lunch are not required to be provided by colleges and universities under the ADA or Section 504. These services may be essential for your child to attend college. You may need to talk with Disabled Student Services and other students who have the same needs about creative solutions to meet these needs.

Visit www.heath.gwu.edu for information on finding the right post-secondary institute.

How to help your child prepare.

There are many steps parents can take to actively participate in their child's transition planning. For example:

- First and foremost, foster independence and encourage your child to become involved in his/her IEP planning.
- Talk about college, how it's different from high school and what will be expected.
- Visit a college to help your child get “a feel” for the environment.
- Encourage your child to take a college class while still in high school.

For more tips and ideas visit: www.thinkcollege.net

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INDEPENDENT LIVING

You have been there for your child since the day they were born. You have no doubt been their biggest advocate, securing their IEP accommodations, fighting for needed services, equipment, or benefits. Now that your child is heading toward adulthood you are no doubt experiencing a mix of relief, joy, and apprehension. It can be hard to let go.



What are some of the things you do for your child that they could be doing on their own?

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What are some of the ways that you can help your child feel empowered to manage their own life?

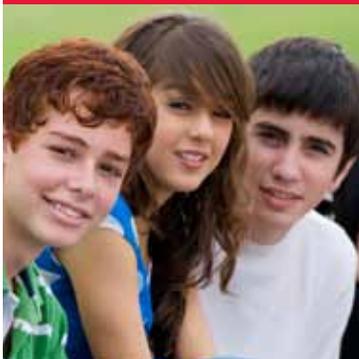
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Parent Tips on Conservatorships

When your teenager turns 18, he or she is legally an adult and can exercise the rights of an adult. Conservatorship is a legal process that allows parents to make decisions for their young adult who has a developmental disability that affects his or her ability to make decisions. If you are the parent of a young adult who is developmentally disabled, conservatorship may provide you with the authority to speak on behalf of your young adult, or to play a role in his or her medical care, which you would not otherwise have. Conservatorship would enable you to act on behalf of your young adult and may include making decisions for necessary medical treatment.



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Whether or not to apply for conservatorship is a personal decision on the part of your family and your son or daughter. There are no right or wrong answers about whether to conserve a young adult. Some families choose to do so right before their son or daughter turns 18 or when they turn 18; some choose to do so later; and some choose not to do it all.

For more information on conservatorships, families can contact their county Bar Association or link to one of the following resource websites:

<http://disabilityrightscalifornia.org>

Disability Rights of California's publication entitled "Conservatorship, Trusts and Wills for people with Developmental or other Disabilities

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/seniors/handbook.htm

"Handbook for Conservators" published by the Judicial Council of California

www.dds.ca.gov/rc/home.cfm www.calbar.ca.gov/state/calbar/calbar_home.jsp

Click the Public Services link and then the Lawyer Referral Services or 1-866-442-2529 (in California)

NOTE: This section provides information only and parents should consult with agencies that provide advocacy or legal services who handle conservatorships.

HEALTHCARE

Helping your child understand his or her disability or medical condition is crucial. While you are still the primary care taker, it's impossible to be there every moment of their lives. As they start to reach out for more independence, they must be prepared to handle the situations they are likely to face.

Here are a few simple tips to help you help your child take charge of his or her health and be better prepared for independence.

- Be sure and talk to them about their needs in general.
- Be sure they know their medications' names and understand the proper dosage. Make sure they can refill prescriptions, if necessary.
- Make sure they can call their doctor and make or change appointments on their own.

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- Make sure they have the necessary insurance information, ID cards, and phone numbers.
- Make sure they have and know emergency contact information i.e.- work numbers, doctor's office, hospitals, family contacts.
- Let them be an active part of doctor visits—encourage them to ask questions and give answers during health care visits.
- Begin to talk about transitioning from a pediatrician to a doctor for adults.
- Discuss and plan out the responsibilities they must start to assume regarding their health care.

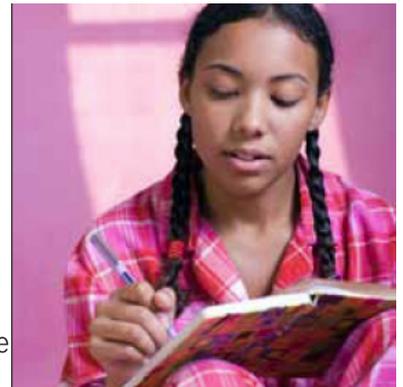
Once your child turns 18, you no longer have access to his or her health information. Health care providers must respect the right to confidentiality and privacy as required by law and it's only through written consent, signed by your child, that you can be made aware of medical information.

For parents of young adults who may have problems making informed decisions about their health this can seem like a scary, even risky, development. Yet, there are steps that parents can take to insure that their child's health care isn't compromised. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

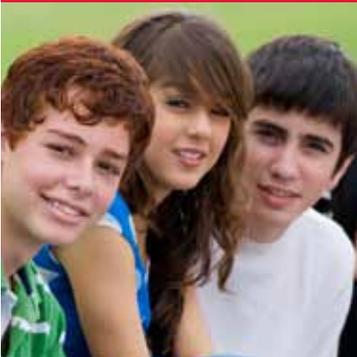
Set up a network of support. This network can include family and friends, yet it must function within the limits of privacy laws.

Obtain signed "release of information" forms so that the family/friends network will have access to medical information if your son or daughter chooses.

This can be a difficult subject as it pertains to an individual's civil rights. A balance must be struck between legal rights and a person's well-being. Therefore, while complicated, parents should approach this with careful thought and the young adult's best interest in mind.



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Helping Maintain Health Coverage

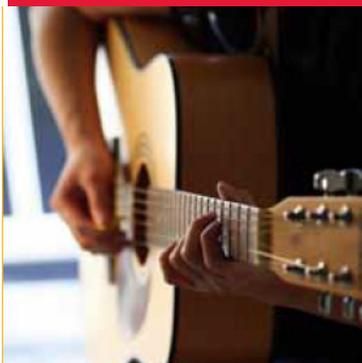
Most coverage for dependent children under employee-based health plans ends at age 19. Age limits are set to go up over the next few years with the changes in health care laws, providing coverage up to age 26. If the young adult is a full or part time student, is disabled (as defined by the Social Security Administration), or if you are providing over half of your child's support you may have more coverage. Be sure to read your plan's policy on dependent children carefully and be prepared to request continuing coverage from your employer's plan 5 or 6 months before your child turns 19, especially if your child needs an evaluation from the Social Security Administration.

SOCIAL/RECREATION

Getting your child involved in sports and recreational activities will help them grow as a person. Transition into adulthood is not an easy thing to do; having something in common with people of their same age group can greatly enhance your child's self-esteem, independence and self-worth. There are wonderful programs specifically designed to meet your child's needs and will allow them full participation.

Things to consider as a parent:

- Encourage your child to get involved in as many different activities as possible.
- Your child's health, well-being, and self-esteem will grow as they become more involved in their community.
- Research transportation options to ensure your child is able to participate.
 - Are there buses available?
 - Can they utilize paratransit?
 - Will you be driving them?



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