

Rhode Island Youth Transition Workbook

DECLARE
YOURSELF

ACCEPT
YOURSELF

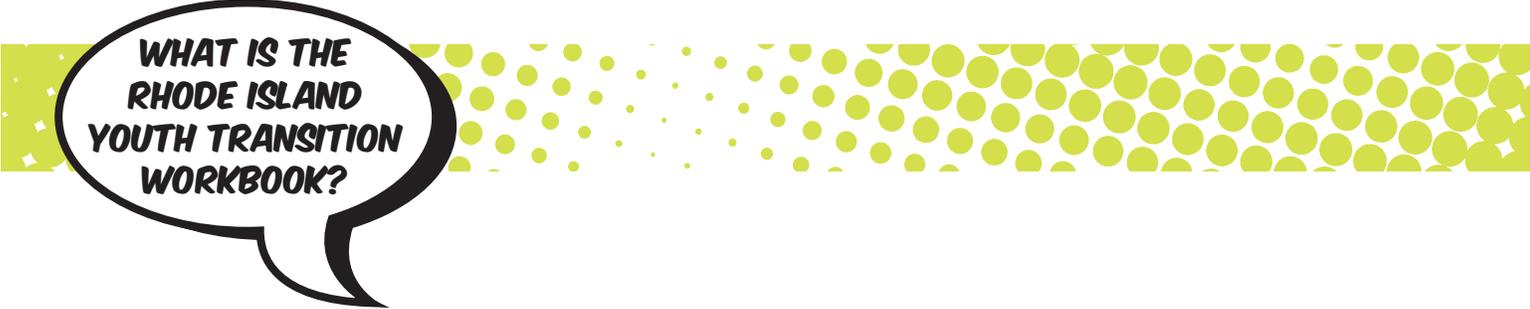
EMPOWER
YOURSELF

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Opening Activity	6
Stage 1: Accept Yourself	7
So They Say You Have A Disability	7
Activity	10
Getting To Know Yourself	12
Activity	18
Activity	20
Activity	22
What Does It All Mean?.....	24
Stage 1 Review	25
Stage 2: Declare Yourself	27
Advocacy: What Is It?	27
Self - Advocacy Skills	27
Healthcare Advocacy	30
Activity	31
Self-Advocacy Dos And Don'ts	33
Self-Advocacy In School	34
Setting Post-School Goals	36
Activity	37
Activity	39
Getting Ready For Your IEP Meeting.....	41
Activity	42
The IEP Meeting	44
Activity	46
Stage 3: Empower Yourself	48
What Is Empowerment?	48
Empowerment Versus Control	49
Activity	51
How Can My Family Help Me?	52
Accommodations – What Are They?	55
Activity	57
How Can I Get Support?	59
Civil Rights and Empowerment	62
Empowerment Opportunity	63
Activity	65
Closing Activity	67

Acknowledgements

- This Rhode Island Youth Transition Workbook has been created with the help of the excellent work of Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Network.
- The Rhode Island Transition Council
- The Rhode Island Department of Health Youth Advisory Council

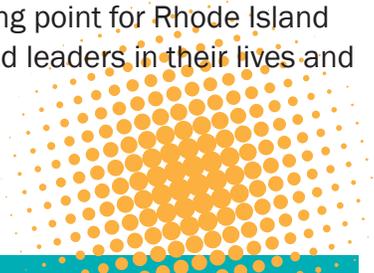


**WHAT IS THE
RHODE ISLAND
YOUTH TRANSITION
WORKBOOK?**

The missions of this workbook are to:

- Help you reach your potential by developing self-determination, advocacy, and leadership skills
- Motivate and inspire you to seek positive and meaningful participation in your transition as you take on the responsibilities and rewards that come with adulthood in the world of employment, higher education, vocational training, independent living, health, and wellness
- Know that you are a valued member of society, you have a voice, and your voice matters
- Challenge you and other young adults with disabilities to actively participate in leadership development activities so you can help younger peers to:
 - 1) Achieve successful transition to adulthood
 - 2) Develop deeper connections to communities and peers
 - 3) Feel more in control of their lives
 - 4) Achieve better post-school outcomes
 - 5) Increase self-esteem and have stronger personal identities
 - 6) Improve life skills and decision-making abilities
 - 7) Establish and maintain mentoring opportunities between youth with disabilities and young adults who have accomplished successful transitions

It is our hope this workbook will serve as a launching point for Rhode Island youth with disabilities to become self-advocates and leaders in their lives and in the lives of others.



**WITHOUT YOU, SOCIETY WOULD NOT BE A WHOLE. YOU SHOULD KNOW
THAT YOUR VOICE SHOULD BE HEARD NO MATTER HOW SMALL, LOUD, OR SOFT. YOU
HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS ANY OTHER MEMBER OF SOCIETY.**

What would you do if you knew you wouldn't fail?

Work for the NBA?

Be a teacher?

Save the whales?

Play the lead guitar in a band?

Be a nurse?

Solve criminal cases?

Fight fires?

Maybe you don't know yet, or you have not really thought about it. Either way you already have the most important part—you!

The Rhode Island Youth Transition Workbook was developed to help you make the most out of your high-school years and to assist you in your transition to the adult world. Think about all you have accomplished as you transitioned from your elementary and middle school years, leaving childhood behind, to where you are now, your adolescence and your high-school years. This is a time of self-discovery and opportunity. The decisions you make and the actions you take will set you on a path towards adulthood. There are three parts in the workbook:

Stage 1: Accept Yourself

Stage 2: Declare Yourself

Stage 3: Empower Yourself

The first part, **Accept Yourself**, is designed to help you better understand who you are as a person, student, and community member. The second part, **Declare Yourself!**, is intended to help you to make yourself known to your family and friends, your teachers, and other people in your community. Finally, the third part, **Empower Yourself!**, will help you take charge of your life.

This Youth Transition Workbook is full of activities to assist you on your journey. Complete the activities...make the most of it!

ACTIVITY

I Am Poem

COMPLETE THIS POEM BY FOLLOWING THE DIRECTIONS IN THE PARENTHESIS.

I AM (TWO SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS YOU HAVE)

I WONDER (SOMETHING YOU ARE CURIOUS ABOUT)

I HEAR (AN IMAGINARY SOUND)

I SEE (AN IMAGINARY SIGHT)

I WANT (A DESIRE)

I AM (THE FIRST LINE OF THE POEM REPEATED)

I PRETEND (SOMETHING YOU PRETEND TO DO)

I FEEL (A FEELING ABOUT SOMETHING IMAGINARY)

I TOUCH (AN IMAGINARY TOUCH)

I WORRY (SOMETHING THAT WORRIES YOU)

I CRY (SOMETHING THAT MAKES YOU SAD)

I AM (THE FIRST LINE OF THE POEM REPEATED)

I UNDERSTAND (SOMETHING YOU KNOW TO BE TRUE)

I SAY (SOMETHING YOU BELIEVE IN)

I DREAM (SOMETHING YOU DREAM ABOUT)

I TRY (SOMETHING YOU MAKE AN EFFORT TO DO)

I HOPE (SOMETHING YOU HOPE FOR)

I AM (THE FIRST LINE OF THE POEM REPEATED)



So They Say You Have A Disability?

People with disabilities may have some limitation or illness that may not allow them to fully participate in certain areas of daily living (walking, writing, reading, or communicating). However, many of the barriers that people with disabilities face are due to the inaccessible environments and negative beliefs that exist in society.

You might have heard the saying that no two snowflakes are alike. The same thing can be said about people. All people have many different characteristics. Some people may need help to do things that are easier for others, and you cannot tell just by looking at a person what they can or can't do. Remember, all people will need help in life.

Most disabilities fall into one or more of the following categories:

1. Physical Disability: People with a physical disability may have difficulties with moving, mobility or every-day activities like eating, and going to the bathroom. They may use assistive devices like wheelchairs or walkers. An example of someone with a physical disability may be a person who has muscular dystrophy, a spinal cord injury, club foot or feet, or a cleft lip or palate.



"DISABILITY, IN AND OF ITSELF, IS A NEUTRAL FACT—NOT A TRAGEDY. PREJUDICE, NOT AUTISM, IS THE TRAGEDY. IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW IMPAIRED A PERSON IS, AUTISM DOESN'T STOP THEM FROM BEING A PART OF THEIR FAMILY, A PART OF THEIR COMMUNITY, A HUMAN BEING OF INFINITE VALUE."

LISA DAXER, A YOUNG WOMAN WITH AUTISM WRITES ABOUT A BARRIER SHE HAS COME ACROSS—PREJUDICE

2. Sensory Disability: People with a sensory disability may have difficulty hearing, seeing, or with body movement and awareness. People with a sensory disability may be sensitive to things like noise, light, touch, or smell and may have difficulty with spatial awareness and controlling movement or balance. Individuals who are blind or have visual impairments may use Braille, canes, or large print to assist them. People who are Deaf or who have hearing impairments may use hearing aids, cochlear implants, or sign language. An example of someone with a sensory disability may be a person with sensory integration disorder, autism, Asperger's syndrome, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

3. Cognitive Disability: People with a cognitive disability may have difficulty learning, communicating, and remembering information. They may also have trouble with problem-solving, paying attention, reading, math, or visual information. They may use daily planners, need more time on tests, or quiet areas to study. An example of someone with a cognitive disability may be a person with Down syndrome, a traumatic brain injury, dyslexia, attention deficit disorder (ADD), ADHD, and autism.

4. Neurological Disorders: People with a neurological disability have problems with how their brain functions and may have difficulties with memory, control, and use of cognitive functioning, sensory and motor skills, speech, language, organizational skills, information processing, social skills, or basic life functions. An example of someone with a neurological disability may be a person with ADHD, cerebral palsy, lupus, dyslexia, epilepsy, Tourette syndrome, traumatic brain injury, spina bifida, autism, Asperger's syndrome, migraines, and learning disabilities.

5. Behavioral and Emotional Disability: People with a behavioral or emotional disability may have difficulty with emotions, feelings, and behaviors. People with this type of disability may use medications, coping skills, or need counseling. An example of someone with a behavioral and emotional disability may be a person with anxiety, eating disorders, substance abuse, depression, ADHD, bipolar disorder, and traumatic brain injury.

6. Health-Related Disability: People with a health-related disability might have a physical condition that affects their overall health. They may have limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems. An example of someone with a health-related disability may be a person with heart disease, asthma, Lyme disease, HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes, and obesity.

Want to know more about your disability?

Here are some people to talk to or places to find more information:

- ✓ Your parents or caregivers
- ✓ Your teachers, school nurse, or school social worker
- ✓ Your doctor
- ✓ The internet (only use websites that end in .org, .edu, or .gov)
- ✓ The library

Never forget:

Having a disability is not a bad thing!

It is a part of you, but it does not define who you are as a person. You need to fully understand what your disability means to you and how it affects your life. Many people notice that they have barriers they need to overcome, and it is more than likely your friends have their own challenges you may not even realize. Sometimes feeling that you are different can make you uncomfortable, and possibly get in the way of your success. If you let it get you down, you will never be able to make your dreams come true.

Keep a positive attitude!

There are going to be times in life that you get frustrated with your disability. It is important to know that this is a part of life, and with a little patience, you will find the light at the end of the tunnel. Do not let it get in the way of the goals that you have set for yourself.

You are not alone!

Always know that just about everyone has or will have a disabling condition at one time in their life. Everyone has things they are good at and things that they are not so good at. It is important to understand what you are good at and what you aren't good at so that you can do things that allow your talents to show. Find out what you are really good at and what you enjoy and then go for it!

Part of accepting yourself means knowing that you have a disability and that you understand what it means for your life. The following activity will help you to understand what your disability is and will give you helpful tips to get to learn about your disability.



It is important to accept your disability

and understand how it impacts your life. Answering these questions should help you get a better understanding of yourself and the role your disability plays in your life.

1. What is your disability?

2. Describe things that are hard for you to do.

3. Describe your strengths.

4. What are your weaknesses?

5. What kind of help do you get at school that helps you do your best?

6. What kind of things do you think you still need to improve on? (examples: time management and organization)

7. What are others doing for you that you want to do or should do for yourself?

Getting to know yourself

To successfully make the transition from school to adult life and to the working world, you will need guidance and encouragement from the people who are active in your life like family members, friends, teachers, and other people in your community. In order for you to make the best decisions, you and the adults in your life will need specific information about you. The best way to gather that information is by participating in appropriate assessments that focus on your talents, knowledge, skills, interests, values, and aptitudes.

What are assessments?

Assessments are an important part of your transition plan. The purpose of the assessment process is to identify transition goals that have meaning to **you!** Assessments are a series of evaluations and tests that will help you learn about yourself. You may discover something about yourself that you never knew or they may help you explain something you could not explain before. The assessments can be formal or informal.

Formal Assessments include a test. The tests are not just an excuse to get you out of class for the day. Sometimes when you are scheduled to take a formal assessment, you will be taking more than one test at a time. Whenever you participate in an assessment, it is important to understand why you're doing it and what it can do for you. Before you take an assessment, ask the following questions:

- 1) **What is this for?**
- 2) **How can it help me?**
- 3) **What is the test like?**
- 4) **How long will the test take?**
- 5) **Am I allowed to have accommodations?**
- 6) **How will I learn about the results of the test?**



When you are scheduled for an assessment, get a good night's sleep and eat a healthy meal. Make sure you know how long you'll be there, how you're going to get there, and what accommodations you are going to be given. During the test, ask questions if you do not understand something.

Within a few weeks after the formal assessment you should meet with someone you trust to review the results of the assessment. The results will help you understand your strengths and needs and will give you ideas to use in your Individualized Education Plan (IEP) during high school and to build your post school goals.

There are 3 types of Assessments

1. Transition Assessment

The transition assessment looks at every part of your life by seeing you as a student, a worker, a friend, a family member, and a person who lives in a community. It helps you look at what support you may need to reach your goals in life. It helps you identify your strengths, needs, and interests.

2. Vocational Assessment and Evaluation

The vocational assessment and evaluation looks at you as a worker. The best way to learn about yourself as a worker is for you to do work in different places. During these experiences, it's important for you and anyone who helps you (boss, teacher, job coach, counselor, or family member) to collect information on how you work in different settings. This will give you good experience and can help you make a good career choice. You can work in a school or local business. You can also volunteer or apply for an internship at an agency that interests you.

3. Career Assessment

The career assessment is another part of the transition assessment and it deals with plans for your career throughout your life. Everyone goes through four stages of planning for careers: awareness, exploration, preparation, and adjustment. You will learn more about this in high school.

Informal Assessments are interviews and questionnaires that gather information to help determine your needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to your plans for your future. For example, if your future education choice is to enroll in a four-year college, it is helpful to know as soon as possible what financial resources your family might have or need. Another example might be about your current and future transportation needs so you can get to work and various social activities in your community. Informal assessments will also provide you and the adults in your life a clearer understanding of influences on your career development, your role models, your knowledge of the working world and your ambitions. In other words, are all the adults in your life helping you enough?

Questions to consider for a lifelong career journey¹

Here are some questions to help you along your journey.

Where do you want to go?

- ▶ **Why do people work? Why do you want to work?**
- ▶ **What have you dreamed of doing when you finish school?**
- ▶ **What kind of job do you want?**
- ▶ **Where do you want to live, and who do you want to live with when you are an adult?**
- ▶ **What do you enjoy doing when you are not in school?**
- ▶ **What jobs do your mother, father, family members and other people you know have?**
- ▶ **What types of things do they do in their jobs?**
- ▶ **What is college? Why do people go to college? What is vocational training? Why do people choose these options?**

¹Adapted from: George Washington University from Sitlington, Neubert, Begun, Lombard, & Leconte. (2nd edition). (2007). Assess for Success: A practitioner's guide for transition assessment. CA: Sage Publications

What do you want to do?

- ▶ **What activities do you like to do in your spare time?**
- ▶ **What volunteer or community-service work do you do?**
- ▶ **If you have had a summer job, did you enjoy it? What parts did you like best?**
- ▶ **Do you prefer being inside or outside?**
- ▶ **Do you prefer being with other people or do you enjoy being by yourself?**
- ▶ **Do you enjoy working with your hands and with tools or do you prefer to solve problems in your head?**
- ▶ **Did you get along well with your classmates? If so, how did you? If not, why didn't you?**
- ▶ **What courses do you need to take to get ready for your job?**
- ▶ **Will you need to take courses during high school and after high school to get ready for the job?**
- ▶ **What requirements will you need to get into these courses?**
- ▶ **How will you prepare to live on your own?**
- ▶ **Do you and your family plan for you to attend college or other training after high school?**
- ▶ **How will you gain the skills needed to succeed in college or other training?**
- ▶ **Will you be able to get a job based on your high-school and/or college coursework?**

How do you move ahead?

- ▶ Will you continue your training and education after you start working?
- ▶ Does the employer help pay for extra schooling or training?
- ▶ How can you get promoted at your company?
- ▶ What benefits does your company offer (insurance, vacation, sick time, retirement)?
- ▶ What will you do if you lose your job or don't like your job?
- ▶ Do you have options to take classes in areas that you enjoy (hobbies)?
- ▶ Can you transfer your job skills to another company, if needed?

Discover Your Skills, Abilities, & Aptitudes²

What are your skills?

Most people don't realize how many skills they have. Each of us uses our skills regularly but don't realize it! If you have friendships with people, then you use skills like listening, talking, caring, and cooperating.

There are three general types of skills:

- 1. Self-management skills:** These are things that help you adapt to new situations and can include your personality, how you get along with others, or how you act in school or at work. Some examples of using self-management skills include being reliable, being cooperative, and being willing to work hard.
- 2. Transferable skills:** These are skills that you can use in many jobs and situations. For example, if you are good at speaking up in class or in front of a group, you could use that skill to become a teacher, lawyer, or an actor.
- 3. Job-related skills:** These skills are occupationally specific. For example, in order to be a successful chef you would need to be skilled in cooking, food safety, nutrition, and teamwork.

² Adapted from West Bay Collaborative's TRANSITION ASSESSMENT 101: An Introduction & Overview of the Process Hands-on and informal transition assessments

What are your aptitudes?

Aptitudes are your natural talents. When you have an aptitude for something, you tend to participate in activities that use your aptitudes because you are “naturally” good at them. Every occupation, from automotive mechanic to zoologist uses certain aptitudes. The work you are most likely to enjoy is work that uses your strongest aptitudes. You may choose a career, go to college, or have years of training to develop the skills and knowledge for a job, but it will not change your aptitude for the job. Aptitude almost always guarantees success. But most importantly, without knowledge and practice, aptitudes are only potential skills!

Some examples of Aptitudes and jobs that use them:



Memory aptitudes: The ability to remember numbers, sounds, words, designs, and identify changes or differences. You could use memory aptitudes as a detective, actor, or public relations specialist.



Manual dexterity: The ability to move your hands easily and skillfully. You could use manual dexterity skills as a mason, painter, carpenter, designer, or medical assistant.



Finger dexterity (fine motor): The ability to coordinate eyes and hands and fingers rapidly and accurately. You could use finger dexterity skills as a surgeon, jeweler, pastry chef, or administrative assistant.



General learning ability: The ability to understand instructions and meaning (the big picture) and to reason and make judgments. You could use general learning ability as a school principal, journalist, doctor, judge, lawyer, policeman, or movie producer.



Clerical perception: The ability to see detail in words and numbers. You could use clerical perception skills as an editor, accountant, inventory clerk, or data entry clerk.

What are your abilities?

Abilities are closely related to aptitudes. They are skills you have learned that involve one or more aptitudes. The higher your aptitude, the better your ability! Occupations have different sets of activities that use various levels and combinations of aptitudes and abilities. If you were to make a list of all your abilities you might find that it never ends. If you start your list with the things you do well, things that are easy for you to do, and things you enjoy doing, this will give you an idea of your skills.

Here is a list of important skills and abilities that teachers, coaches, employers, and friends are looking for:

- Communication
- Enthusiasm for your work
- Efficient planning
- Positive attitude
- Teamwork/cooperation
- Responsibility
- Flexibility

ACTIVITY

How important is each item to you?

CIRCLE TRUE (T) OR FALSE (F) FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

T F I GET SATISFACTION FROM HELPING OTHERS.

T F I'D LIKE TO HAVE A JOB IN WHICH I CAN USE MY IMAGINATION AND BE INVENTIVE.

T F IN MY LIFE, MONEY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN JOB SECURITY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS.

T F IT IS MY AMBITION TO HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES.

T F I AM NOT A RISK-TAKER AND WOULD PREFER A CAREER THAT HAS LITTLE RISK.

T F I ENJOY WORKING WITH PEOPLE INSTEAD OF BY MYSELF.

T F I WOULD NOT BE HAPPY DOING THE SAME THING ALL THE TIME.

ACTIVITY

What matters most to you?

FOR EACH ITEM CHECK THE BOX THAT SAYS HOW IMPORTANT EACH ITEM IS TO YOU.

	REALLY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
GOOD HEALTH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
JUSTICE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MARRIAGE/FAMILY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FAITH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FAME	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BEAUTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESPECT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ACCOMPLISHMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRAVELING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOVE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ACTIVITY

What matters most to you? continued...

FOR EACH ITEM CHECK THE BOX THAT SAYS HOW IMPORTANT EACH ITEM IS TO YOU.

	REALLY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
FUN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
POWER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
INDIVIDUALISM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SAFETY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FRIENDSHIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CHARITY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HONOR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
INTELLIGENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Narrowing down your interests

THINK ABOUT WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU AND ABOUT YOUR APTITUDES, ABILITIES, AND SKILLS.

List the three skills you feel describe you best.

1.

2.

3.

List career areas that interest you.

1.

2.

3.

Where would you find jobs in the career areas you listed above?

1.

2.

3.

Would any of your three interests fall into categories as positions you could find now?

▶ Volunteer position: _____

▶ Internship position: _____

▶ Part-time position: _____

▶ Full-time position: _____

What Does it All Mean?

Summary of Performance

This document will help you collect information you need to plan for your future when you leave high school and is called a Summary of Performance (SOP). The SOP summarizes your work and the kinds of help you received in high school. In the future, you may want to share it with colleges, service agencies, government agencies, or support providers.

Although schools may use different versions, there are some basic things every SOP will include.

- 1. General information about you:** your name, address, and contact information.
- 2. Measurable post-school goals (sometimes called post-school outcomes):** focuses on your goals for learning, working, and community living after you leave high school. They can include:
 - ▶ Additional education and training (college or technical school goals)
 - ▶ Employment (career and job goals)
 - ▶ Community participation (where you want to live, transportation, health, and recreation)
- 3. Response to school-based interventions:** This section of the SOP includes information on what things have helped you do well in school (accommodations, supports, services, and equipment). It asks your teacher to provide feedback on what worked well for you in school and suggestions for what may work well in other settings. It may also include what others should know about you to help you achieve your goals.
- 4. Present levels of academic and functional performance:** This section of the SOP includes information about your present abilities in reading and math as well as how you are doing generally in school. It may also include some of your test scores and assessments that focused on careers, social skills, budgeting, behavior, and your ability to live independently and do things for yourself.
- 5. Functional impact statement:** This section of the SOP provides a realistic evaluation of how your disability may affect you at work, at school, and in the community. It provides suggestions about how others can support you in these settings and what community services may be helpful to you as you work towards your goals.
- 6. Recommendations:** This section of the SOP is a summary of everything that was included in the other five sections. It lists things you need to be successful in all areas of your life including what you will need in order to get more academic training, get and keep a job, and live independently.

Review

Terms to remember

- 1) **Transition** - an organized set of activities that help you move from high school to college, post-secondary training, independent living, or work successfully; transition focuses on what you need and what you want to do with your future
- 2) **Post-school goals** - things students decide to do with their life after they leave high school
- 3) **Assessments** - a series of tests and activities that evaluate your growth emotionally, physically, and mentally; and your needs, strengths, and abilities
- 4) **Formal assessments** - can include a test; sometimes when you are scheduled to take a formal assessment, you will be taking more than one test at a time
- 5) **Vocational assessments** - evaluates you as a worker
- 6) **Career assessments** - focuses on plans for your career throughout your lifetime
- 7) **Transition assessments** - evaluates every part of your life by seeing you as a student, a worker, a friend, a family member, and a person who lives in a community

The three possible post-school goals or outcomes

1. **Post-secondary education or training:** going to a two-year or four-year university, community college, technical school, or anything that furthers your education
2. **Employment**
3. **Independent living:** Where do you want to live? How you will get around in your community? How will you manage your health? What you want to do in your free time?

You can find more information about the things you read in this chapter at a Regional Transition Center (RTC). RTCs help schools, families, and communities prepare students for adult life. (The contact information below is correct as of August 1, 2015.)

If you live in:

Northern Rhode Island - Pawtucket, Central Falls, Johnston, Cumberland, Woonsocket, Lincoln, Burrillville, Smithfield, North Smithfield, North Providence

Cynthia VanAvery, Transition Coordinator Northern RI Collaborative - Transition Employment Center (TEC)
640 George Washington Hwy. Suite 200 Lincoln, RI 02865
(401) 721-0709
email: cvanavery@nric-ri.org

West Bay - Coventry, Cranston, Foster, Glocester, Scituate, Warwick, West Warwick

Therese Curran, Transition Coordinator West Bay Collaborative
144 Bignall St. Warwick, RI 02888
(401) 941- 8353 ext. 124
email: tcurran@westbaycollaborative.org

East Bay - East Providence, Portsmouth, Warren, Bristol, Little Compton, Barrington, Middletown, Tiverton, Newport

Jane Cotter, Transition Coordinator East Bay Educational Collaborative
317 Market Street Warren, RI 02885
Phone: (401) 628-2057
email: jane.cotter@ebecri.org

Southern Rhode Island - North Kingstown, South Kingstown, Narragansett, Westerly, East Greenwich, Exeter, West Greenwich, Charlestown, Richmond, Hopkinton, New Shoreham, Jamestown

Kerri Collins, Transition Coordinator Southern RI Transition Center
859 Nooseneck Hill Road, West Greenwich, 02817
Phone: (401) 481-5161
email: kcollins@nric-ri.org

Providence

Please call any one of the Regional Transition Center Coordinators above.

Your family may also need some extra support...you may want to suggest they contact:

Rhode Island Parent Information Network

Phone: 401-270-0101

www.RIPIN.org or <http://www.startingpointsforparents.org/home>



**DECLARE
YOURSELF**

Advocacy: What Is It and How To Advocate For Yourself

One of the most important parts of becoming independent is learning how to advocate for what you want. If you advocate for yourself, you are speaking up for what you want and not letting other people speak for you. Many times, young people allow other people (usually adults) to make decisions for them. While advice and assistance from adults is a good thing, your future is your decision! This section will give you some suggestions on how to be your own advocate.

Being a good self advocate

Do Research.

In order to tell people what you want, you need to know what is out there. What are your options? What do you have to do to get the things you want? It is up to you to do your homework about things like career options, colleges, accommodations, and places you can go to get the things you need. Be open to going to Transition Fairs, college and career planning events, the Dare to Dream conference...and talk with family, friends, teachers, and mentors about these activities. You need to know the pros and cons about decisions you might make so you can make an educated decision.

Communicate.

Learning how to communicate with people is important when you advocate for your needs.

- Be polite. Good manners go a long way, but don't let people take advantage of you. Don't forget to smile!
- Be confident. You know what you want to say. (You did the research, and you know what you're talking about.)
- Be heard. It is your life, so make your feelings known. People are not mind readers. You need to make sure they understand you! If they do not understand you, ask them what they do not understand.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, TALK TO YOUR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR OR CALL THE OFFICE OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (ORS) AT 401-421-7005

Compromise.

While the decisions that are being made are about you, it is important to be open-minded about other people's advice and ideas. Sometimes two heads are better than one. You may have one idea and your Individualized Education Plan (IEP) leader may have a different one. Combining the two may make an even better thought. Also, make sure that you are realistic about your goals. If you are not a good athlete, wanting to be in the NBA is probably not a good career goal.

**ADVOCACY
IS DEFINED AS AN
ACTION THAT PRODUCES
CHANGE.**

Be a team player.

You have a lot of people who can give you good advice. Know who those people are. Let the professionals do their jobs, and let your family be your family. Let your friends be your friends. They all have an important role in your transition process. Listen to their advice but remember it's all about you! You have the final say.

Self-Advocacy Skills

Self-advocates know their strengths and needs. They ask questions and get help when it's appropriate without being too demanding or helpless. Once you leave high school, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) no longer protects your rights so it is even more important that you have a transition plan for you to learn about your rights and how to tell others your preferences, concerns, and conclusions about school and adulthood.



Exercise your rights.

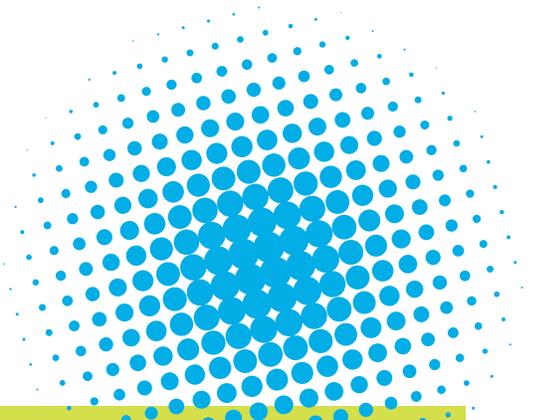
- Participate in your IEP.
- Express your preferences and interests to the IEP team.
- Express your needs and desires about colleges and service agencies.
- Express your views through the political process.
- Explain your needs for accommodation.
- Serve as a board member of a community organization.
- Join committees that plan school activities.

Be responsible.

- Make your own decisions and learn from your mistakes.
- Manage job searches and work.
- Manage your finances.
- Follow through on commitments you make.
- Keep important documents safe and know where they are (ID, birth certificate, insurance cards).

Ask for help or support.

- Understand your disability.
- Learn how to request assistance to get the desired help.
- Learn where to get the help you need.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THE THINGS YOU READ IN THIS SECTION:

**NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ON WORKFORCE AND DISABILITY FOR YOUTH
WWW.NCWD-YOUTH.INFO**

**RHODE ISLAND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT-TRANSITION
WWW.RITAP.ORG/TRANSITION**

Healthcare Advocacy

Almost all parts of your life will transition in some way. In order to be successful in college, trade school, or the workplace, you will need to take care of your health. Healthcare transition is an important step toward independence. Often this transition includes going to doctor's appointments without your parent/caregiver, managing your own medications, finding new doctors, possibly switching hospitals or where you get services, and getting different insurance coverage.



When you turn 18, you are considered an adult by the medical community. This means that you are in charge of your own medical decisions. Your parents cannot be in charge anymore. They can help you make decisions but, ultimately, the final decision is yours to make. Your doctors will ask you about your medical needs, your health history, and what procedures you may or may not want. You need to be prepared to handle these changes and begin to understand your care as an adult. However, your family or guardians can still be involved in the decisions.

Who can you talk to about your healthcare transition?

- Your parents/caregiver
- Your doctor
- School nurse
- Your IEP team
- Family members and friends you trust

YOU CAN GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HEALTHCARE TRANSITION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH BY CALLING 222-5960 OR VISITING THE WEBSITE AT WWW.HEALTH.RI.GOV/SPECIALHEALTHCARENEEDS/ABOUT/ADOLESCENTTRANSITION

ACTIVITY

How can I deal with these health factors?

READ EACH QUESTION ABOUT AN IMPORTANT HEALTH ISSUE AND DECIDE HOW YOU WOULD DEAL WITH THAT PARTICULAR ISSUE. WRITE YOUR ANSWER IN THE COLUMN TO THE RIGHT.

	Health Factor	How can I deal with this issue?
Do I understand my primary healthcare? (What do I have to do to stay healthy?)		
Can I provide a healthy diet and enough exercise for myself?		
Do I have the self-care skills I need? Do I know how to handle stress?		
Can I communicate my questions and concerns?		
Can I get to and from medical appointments?		
Do I need to change my environment to accommodate medical equipment?		
Does my support team (including doctors) understand my health needs relating to my post-school goals?		

Helpful Hints About Self-Advocacy

Advocacy is not always easy. In fact, it usually is not easy. Advocacy takes time, knowledge, and dedication. Often when we have to advocate for ourselves, we may be in situations that make us upset, angry, and emotional. Although you might feel like it is the right time to advocate, it is usually better to wait and become more informed before advocating. Below is a list of helpful hints for self-advocacy. Advocacy is a skill that takes practice. The more you practice advocating for yourself, the better you will get.

Do this	Do not do this
Be polite.	Yell or demand.
Ask questions.	Be shy.
Know the facts.	Come to a meeting unprepared.
Keep a record of important papers, phone numbers, and names. Be organized.	Lose your records, phone numbers, and names of people who helped or hindered you.
Send thank you notes and show your appreciation.	Be ungrateful for people's time and effort.
Give your contact information. Get other people's contact information.	Skip a meeting when someone has helped you get that meeting.
Be confident.	Be a pushover or arrogant (overconfident).
Be willing to compromise.	Be close-minded.

Self-Advocacy in School: The IEP and the secondary transition process

Many youth hear about their IEPs and their transition plans, but some students might not understand what their school is talking about. This section will help you to:

- ▶ understand the federal law that protects your rights;
- ▶ learn what's included in an IEP and why it's important for you to participate; and
- ▶ use the transition process to plan for your future.

What are your rights?

The national IDEA law determines the accommodations and supports provided to students, ages three to 21, with disabilities. One goal of the IDEA is to ensure that all students have a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). A FAPE means all students have the right to be taught in a public school and get an education that is right for the person at no cost to the student. Throughout your education, you should get help to set goals for further education, employment, and/or independent living. IDEA requires that students with disabilities have an IEP.

What is an IEP?

Your IEP is created by your own specialized team that includes you, your teachers, your family, your guidance counselors, and anyone else you feel is important (doctor, employer, personal assistant, mentor, or aid). An IEP is a document that summarizes:

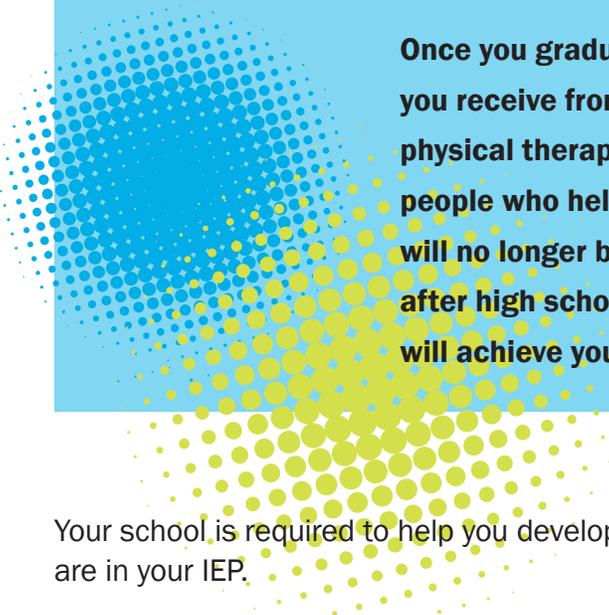
- **What you do well**
- **How your disability affects your learning**
- **What skills you need to work on in school this year**
- **What services your school will provide**
- **Where your learning will take place**
- **What accommodations you receive**
- **What your goals are for high school and after high school**

Since your IEP is about you, it is a unique opportunity to be in control of your life and your experiences in high school. When you actively participate in your IEP, you can contribute to your success after high school.

Your school and your teachers are responsible for making sure that everything in your IEP helps you. If you don't think something is helping you, tell an adult you trust. Each year your IEP will be reviewed and updated.

Transition planning and the IEP

- Transition planning must be included in your IEP beginning at age 14.
- Transition planning helps you decide what you are going to do after you graduate from high school.
- Transition planning includes an organized set of activities that helps you move from high school to college, post-secondary training, independent living, or work. It focuses on what you need and what you want to do.



Once you graduate from high school, the assistance and services you receive from your teachers such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, wrap-around services and the people who help you with math, reading, behavior, or test taking will no longer be there to help you. But as you know, life goes on after high school. Therefore, you need to have a plan for how you will achieve your goals and live life as an adult.

Your school is required to help you develop goals for when you leave school. Your post-school goals are in your IEP.

The three types of post-school goals that you need to think about are:

1. Education or training (going to a university, community college, technical school, or anything that furthers your education).
2. Getting a job.
3. Independent living and how to live on your own, where you want to live, how you will get around in your community, and what you want to do in your free time.

How do I set post-school goals?

To be able to set post-school goals, you need to know about your interests, strengths and weaknesses. This is when you can use the information from your assessment. (Refer to pages 11 and 12 about assessments.) This information can be used to help you develop your post-school goals.

Your post-school goals will help you decide what classes and activities you will take during high school. Transition planning helps the IEP team learn about your interests and includes a list of agencies that can help you transition out of high school.

What to expect at your IEP meeting

Even though an IEP meeting can be scary, it is your chance to have a say in the classes, activities, and help that you have in high school.

Going to your first IEP meeting can be overwhelming. There may be people in the meeting that you have not met yet, but your principal, teachers, and parents will be there. You might feel like it is hard to speak your mind. Teachers and other adults in the meeting might use words or abbreviations you might not understand. That's okay. Ask adults to explain things that you do not understand.

How to Participate in Your IEP

Because the IEP is about you, you need to be the one ready to participate and be honest about what you need and want. Everyone will be talking about your education and life, so it is important for you to express your opinions.

If you feel that something needs to be added or changed in your IEP, here are some suggestions about what to do:

- Try to be polite and courteous of others when they are speaking.
- Say "excuse me" if you would like to say something.
- Be calm and speak clearly. Don't put your hands near your mouth or chin.



IDEA!

THE TEAM MEMBERS ARE HERE TO HELP YOU AND SHOULD BE OPEN TO YOUR IDEAS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS. YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO SHARE YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT WHAT IS IN YOUR IEP AND HOW IT IS PUT IN THERE.



Questions about my IEP

1) What does my IEP do for me?

.....

.....

.....

2) What are my IEP goals?

.....

.....

.....

3) How does my IEP effect my education?

.....

.....

.....

4) How does my IEP prepare me to live independently?

.....

.....

.....

5) What is my role in my IEP?

.....

.....

.....

6) What is my parent/guardian's role in my IEP?

.....

.....

.....



Transition Planning

What are my goals after high school?

1)

2)

3)

What am I doing in school that is helping me reach these goals?

1)

2)

3)

What supports and services can help me with the options listed below?

Going to college, business, technical or trade school

1)

2)

3)

Getting a job (Employment)

1)

2)

3)

Getting ready for your IEP meeting

Everyone wants your IEP meeting to be as productive and successful as possible.

Before your IEP meeting

- Review your IEP from last year. (Ask for a copy if you need one.)
- Make notes on the changes or additions you want to make.
- Highlight things you don't understand.
- Talk to a trusted adult about what you want to add or change in this year's IEP.
- Be able to answer these questions:
 - 1) What are your post-school goals?
 - 2) Can you tell us about your disability?
 - 3) What are your strengths and needs?
 - 4) What is your learning style? (How do you learn best? What prevents you from learning?)
 - 5) What accommodations do you need and why do you need them?
 - 6) What medications do you take?
 - 7) What medical needs do you have?
 - 8) Do you want to be involved in activities at school? If so, which ones?
 - 9) What classes do you want to take?

THINK ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN AT SCHOOL—SPORTS, DRAMA, BAND, PEER GROUPS, OR ANYTHING ELSE.

THINK ABOUT THE SUPPORTS YOU MIGHT NEED TO GET YOU THERE AND HELP YOU STAY INVOLVED. THINK ABOUT CLASSES YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE. IF YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT WHAT YOUR SCHOOL HAS TO OFFER, JUST ASK YOUR TEACHER. THE NEXT ACTIVITY WILL HELP YOU BRAINSTORM SO THAT IN YOUR NEXT IEP MEETING, YOU CAN BRING YOUR LIST AND SHARE IT WITH YOUR TEAM.



Transition Planning

School activities you'd like to join

1.

2.

3.

4.

Classes you'd like to take

1.

2.

3.

4.

Help you'd like to have while you are in school

1.

2.

3.

4.

Classes you think will help you in life after high school

1.

2.

3.

4.



TAKE CHARGE!

At Your IEP Meeting

By the time you are in high school, you should consider running your own IEP meeting. If you don't know how to run a meeting, ask a family member, favorite teacher, or a trusted adult for help. Before the IEP meeting you can ask a small group of people (family members, friends, or other trusted adults) to help you practice what you want to say. At first you may feel uncomfortable talking at your IEP meeting. It might help to write down what you want to say and have someone else read it. You could also make a PowerPoint or a short video of what you would like to discuss at your IEP.

Double check your IEP: Make sure your age and anticipated graduation date are listed and are correct.

Discuss and identify your post-school goals.

Talk about how you are doing in school: This is when your present levels of academic achievement and functional performance are included.

Talk about the classes you are taking and activities you are joining.

Look back at your activity worksheet - [Transition Planning \(page 41\)](#). Take the worksheet with you to your IEP meeting so you remember everything you want to say.

Annual Goals

Things to think about when discussing and reviewing your goals:

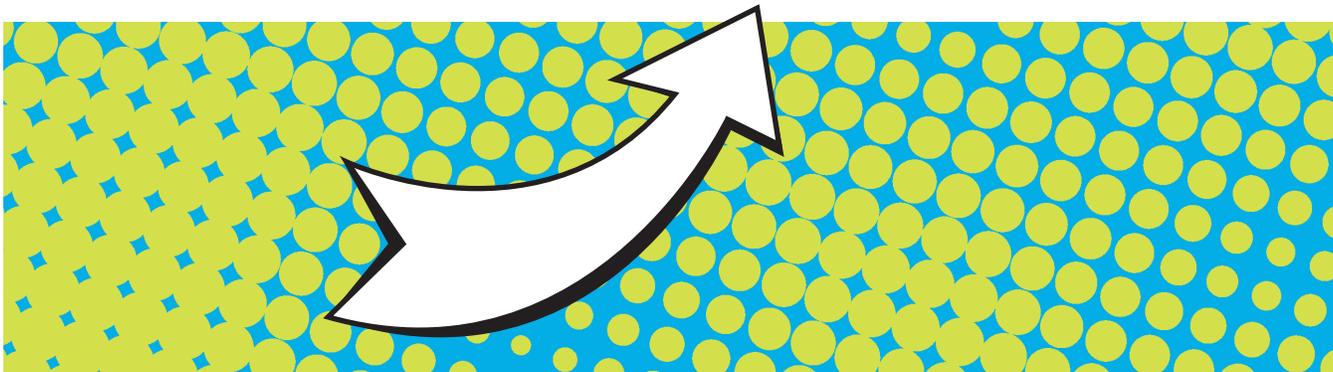
- What skills do you need to reach your post-school goals?
- Are there any health issues that interfere with your learning or prevent you from being in a classroom all day?
- Do you have any behavioral issues? What makes you stressed?
- Are your annual IEP goals related to your post-school goals?
- Make sure all of your IEP goals are clear and you know what you need to do during the school year.
- Do you agree with these goals?
- Do you understand how your progress will be measured throughout the year and how you will know when your goals are met?

Complete the other sections of the IEP

Based on your transition post-school goals you will talk about any accommodations, modifications, specialized instruction, supports, or related services that you will need to meet your goals for the school year. It is important to understand what accommodations you get now so that you can ask for them in the future. As an adult, you will need to know what accommodations you need. Some examples of specially-designed accommodations are extra time to finish tests, wheelchair ramps, help reading a book or a test, or having audio books. Some examples of related services are physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT), and speech language therapy.

WHEN IS YOUR NEXT IEP MEETING?

WRITE THE DATE HERE:





How to make my IEP successful

Throughout the year, (usually at the end of each marking period), you should ask yourself the following questions to make sure you are making progress on meeting your goals and that you are getting help.

1. Are you getting the help that was promised at your IEP meeting?

.....
.....

2. If not, what help are you missing?

.....
.....

3. Who can you ask about getting the help you need?

.....
.....

4. Are you meeting your IEP goals?

.....
.....

5. If you don't think you are meeting your goals, who can you talk to about the problem?

.....
.....

6. List the ways you are achieving your post-school goals.

.....
.....

7. What is stopping you from meeting your post-school goals?

.....
.....

8. Have you talked to people at any other service agencies who can help you meet your post-school goals?

.....
.....

9. How are you challenging yourself to learn new things?

.....
.....



EMPOWER
YOURSELF

Empowerment is a process that helps you gain control of your life.

People who are empowered have the knowledge and ability to take charge, be leaders, and help their community.

Empowerment means that you can:

- ✓ Get information and resources.
- ✓ Make your own decisions.
- ✓ Choose from different options.
- ✓ Stay positive when you are trying to make a change.
- ✓ Improve your self-image, ignore stereotypes, and stop discrimination.

Empowerment will help you:

- ✓ Make decisions about your life.
- ✓ Show others you have control of your own life.
- ✓ Take responsibility for your own actions.
- ✓ Be true to yourself.
- ✓ Feel good about yourself.
- ✓ Feel a sense of accomplishment.
- ✓ Empower other people.
- ✓ Be a role model for other youth.

Empowerment Versus Control

Support and control are different. Sometimes it is very hard to know the difference between the two. People with disabilities often need more support than other people, and they often count on the people in their life (parents, siblings, teachers, friends, etc.) to help them. But it is very important for you to know when someone is supporting you and when someone is controlling you.

Support is when someone else provides help that you request and allows you to do the things that you want to do.

Control is when someone else provides help that you did not request or when someone else makes decisions for you without your permission.

You have the right to make decisions about your life and the care you get.

Someone might be controlling you if:

- They don't ask what you want.
- They speak for you.
- They do things without asking you if it is okay with you.
- They don't let you say what you want.

What should you do when you think someone is trying to control you?

- Ask them if they realize that what they are doing makes you feel like you are being controlled.
- Ask them why they are trying to control you.
- Explain that you have ideas, and you would like them to respect your ideas.
- Suggest a compromise between both your idea and their idea.
- If they do not change their behavior, you should ask another trusted adult or friend to help you fix the problem.

It is especially important for family members to participate in your life because many times, your family is one of the best support systems you could have. Family members can help you learn more about your disability and can help you find tips on how to make your life better and easier. They should be able to help you when you have trouble or if you need guidance. Family members love and understand you best.

Here is an example that describes the difference between support and control:

- **Support:** Your family helps you plan what you want to do after you graduate from high school (go to college, find a job, assist with independent living).
- **Control:** Your family wants to move you to an assisted-living facility after high school and they do not discuss it with you. They tell you they think you can't handle being independent.

Emotional Support

One of the most important things family can provide is emotional support. Emotional support can provide you with comfort, encouragement, and patience. Family members or trusted adults can help you cope with frustration, anger, disappointment, sadness, anxiety, or fear.





Recognizing patience and encouragement

CHECK OFF THE WAYS YOUR FAMILY SHOWS PATIENCE WITH YOU OR WAYS THEY GIVE YOU ENCOURAGEMENT AND COMFORT

My family shows patience with me when:

- I lose my temper
- I don't understand something
- I do not follow directions they gave me
- I forget to do things
- I say I don't know
- I spend too much time in the bathroom
- I misplace things

My family gives me encouragement when:

- I play sports
- I have trouble with homework
- I say I can't do something
- I am sad or frustrated
- I try new things
- I am having trouble with my friends or other students
- I hurt myself
- I have trouble talking
- I start my first job
- I am getting ready for an interview
- I get a good grade on a test

My family gives me comfort when:

- I am sad or mad
- Problems caused by my disability challenge me
- I admit I did something bad or wrong/mean
- I have trouble doing something

How can my family help me?

Your family members are the ones who can provide the most support. At different times in your life, the support your family gives you may change.

When you are younger, family members can:

- Help you make plans with friends.
- Drive you and your friends to social gatherings (after-school activities, school dances or other meetings that help you meet and get to know other people with similar disabilities).
- Help with homework or meeting with teachers to review your progress.
- Let you try to do new things even though you might make a mistake.

Unsupportive

- Parent:** Don't make any plans this afternoon... you have a doctor's appointment today at 2:30. I will pick you up at school at 1:45.
- Child:** Why do I have to go to the doctors? I made plans with my friends to hang out this afternoon.
- Parent:** Because I said so. It's your yearly exam. I want to talk to the doctor about your sleeping habits. You wake up late everyday because you are up all night and you've been late for school too many times.
- Child:** What are you talking about? I was only late twice. And I can talk to the doctor by myself—I'm old enough.
- Parent:** No, you are not old enough...you're only a teenager...you don't know how to talk to doctors. I know what to say, and I'll do all the talking.

Supportive

- Parent:** You remember you have an appointment with Dr. Lewis today?
- Child:** Yeah, but why are we going? I'm not sick.
- Parent:** It's your annual appointment. Dr. Lewis is going to be happy to see how much you've grown. Are you curious?
- Child:** Yeah.
- Parent:** How do you want to handle the subject of your sleeping? Are you going to bring it up or would you rather I bring it up?
- Child:** You can start, but it's my life so I want to talk too. I know what I'm going to say.
- Parent:** Why don't we write down some of the concerns and questions you have so you don't forget anything.
- Child:** Ok, yeah. You know mom, I might want to talk to the doctor by myself. Because there are some things I learned from school I want to ask Dr. Lewis about.
- Parent:** Absolutely you can, I am excited that you would want to take an active part in your appointment. Whatever I can do to help you know you can ask me anything.
- Child:** Yes, mom...you always have a lot to say... LOL

When you are getting ready to transition to adulthood, family members can:

- Visit and tour colleges and vocational schools with you
- Help you learn about and manage you own healthcare
- Help you learn to use public transportation, learn how to drive, or find other ways to get where you need to go
- Help you research different choices for independent living
- Talk with you about what classes you should take in high school and after high school

Your parents or caregivers aren't the only members of your family who can provide support. Siblings (brothers and sisters) or extended family members can help too. Siblings can include you when they do things with friends. Extended family members can help you learn skills that you will need in adulthood.

Family Involvement: Dos and Don'ts

Do:

- ▶ Research your disability online or read books together so that everyone understands it better.
- ▶ Meet and spend time with other people who have had experiences with your disability.
- ▶ Find support groups in your community and ask your family members to go with you.
- ▶ Learn how to be patient and to be tolerant of one another.
- ▶ Accept and embrace your disability and find ways to cope with challenges it brings.
- ▶ Learn ways to be independent while you're still living with your family. This will make the transition to independent living easier for you and for them.
- ▶ Find ways to help yourself (find wheelchair ramps, use a guide dog, ask for directions, or use public transportation).
- ▶ Maintain open lines of communication with your family members.

Don't:

- ▶ Think you're less important than anyone because of your disability.
- ▶ Let your disability stop you from doing things with your family.
- ▶ Reject support from your family.
- ▶ Be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

Your family members may also need some extra support. They can call the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) at 270-0101 or visit www.RIPIN.org.

ACTIVE FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO HELP YOU BE SUCCESSFUL. STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT FAMILY INVOLVEMENT HELPS YOU DO BETTER IN SCHOOL, GET BETTER GRADES AND TEST SCORES, HAVE A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE, AND HAVE MORE AMBITIONS FOR YOUR FUTURE.



ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations

Accommodations are important because they help you succeed when you are trying to complete a task. Schools are required to give you the accommodations you need while you are in school. It is important for you to know what accommodations you are getting now so that you can ask for them in the future. As an adult, you will need to know what accommodations you need. Don't assume that other people will know what you need without being told.

Some examples of accommodations are:

- ▶ Extra time to finish tests
- ▶ Wheelchair ramps
- ▶ Assistance in reading a book or taking a test
- ▶ Audio books
- ▶ Class assignments in electronic format
- ▶ Notetaker
- ▶ Single dorm room
- ▶ Comfortable furniture
- ▶ Adjustable furniture
- ▶ Lab equipment located within reach
- ▶ Reasonable adjustments in attendance policy
- ▶ Braille menu
- ▶ Large-print books or handouts
- ▶ Computer with voice input/output
- ▶ Proofreader to check spelling and grammar
- ▶ TV monitor to enlarge images
- ▶ Audio recordings of class sessions

What places can help me get my accommodations?

Until you graduate from high school, the school district has to provide you with reasonable accommodations to help you with your disability. In college or in the workplace, you have to be the one to get accommodations for yourself. You can schedule appointments with disability services and tell them what you need to be successful. Colleges should be able to provide you with what you need once you tell them about accommodations you used in high school. But if you don't take action and contact them, they won't know what you need. For additional information, contact:

- ▶ **Rhode Island Disability Law Center: 831-3150**
- ▶ **Americans with Disabilities Act website: www.ADA.gov**

Is College in Your Future?

Attend the annual College Forum. This event will help you understand what to expect in college and how you can get ready for college. Some of the topics you can learn about at the forum include:

- ▶ The freshman experience
- ▶ Navigating admissions and accessing accommodations
- ▶ Assistive technology
- ▶ Just for Students – Legal rights and responsibilities
- ▶ Just for Parents – Preparing your child for independence
- ▶ What other students experienced when they went to college

For more information, contact

Kerri Collins, Transition Coordinator
Southern Rhode Island Transition Center
Phone: 401-481-5161
Email: kcollins@nric-ri.org

ACTIVITY

Accommodations to help you

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ACCOMMODATIONS YOU USE TO HELP YOU DO BETTER IN SCHOOL? HOW DO THEY HELP YOU?

1.

.....

2.

.....

3.

.....

4.

.....

5.

.....

ARE THERE OTHER THINGS THAT YOU NEED HELP WITH? DO YOU NEED MORE HELP WITH ONE OF THE THINGS YOU LISTED ABOVE?

.....

.....

.....

How Can I Get Support?

As a person with a disability, you will be eligible for assistance from a service provider. This section gives you tips to help you contact the agencies that provide the services you need. This section also includes some helpful questions you can ask any service provider. When you turn 18, service providers expect you to speak for yourself.

Information you will need to fill out an application to get help:

- Your full name (first, middle, and last name; no nicknames)
- Social Security number (Try to memorize this number.)
- A list of your disability diagnosis
- Accommodations you are requesting
- Medical history (blood type, surgeries you have had, illnesses, shots, medication allergies, food and other allergies)
- Employment history (where you worked and when you worked there)
- Education history (how much school you have finished so far)
- Your income and your family's household income
- Your parents' names (includes any different last names before they got married)
- Addresses (past and present; street, city/town, county, ZIP code)
- Phone numbers (past and present; cell phone and land lines)
- Emergency contact name and phone number
- References (Names and phone numbers of people who know you and can talk about what you do well. Do not use your parents as a reference. Consider using a teacher, coach, or mentor as a reference.)

You will also need the following documents:

- Valid photo identification (driver's license, state identification card, passport, visa)
- Social Security card
- Birth certificate
- Health insurance cards (if necessary)
- Recent paycheck stubs (if necessary)
- At least two letters of recommendation (from a teacher, employer, coach, or mentor)

Questions you can ask an agency or service provider:

1. What kind of services does your agency provide?
2. Does any of your agency's funding come from the federal government?
3. How does your agency help youth who are transitioning to adulthood?
4. What is the agency's application process and how long will it take?
5. Who can I contact if I have any more questions?





GET
EMPOWERED

Earlier, you learned what empowerment is. It's a good idea to review some of the ways that you can become more empowered.

- ▶ Include people in your life that support you and help you reach your goals.
- ▶ Know what accommodations you need.
- ▶ Collect all your important documents and information. Keep them all together and in a safe place.
- ▶ Learn about service providers in your community. In addition to other people who can help you, there are also agencies that can help you. The agencies that can help you the most will depend on what your post-school goals are.

For more information:

Rhode Island Technical Assistance Project-Transition Resources
www.ritap.org/transition/resources#drop

Paul V. Sherlock center on Disabilities-Transition
www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/linkTrans.html

Rhode Island Parent Information Network
www.ripin.org

Civil Rights and Empowerment

When you turn 18, legally, you are an adult. There are many responsibilities, opportunities, and rights that come with being a legal adult. You are old enough to sign documents for yourself, vote, join the military, and speak for yourself in medical and legal matters. These are all very important rights and responsibilities.

Perhaps the most important right is your right to vote. You may remember going with your parents when they voted. The place where you vote is called a polling place. Anyone who is registered to vote is assigned a specific polling place. On the local level, you can vote to elect people to be on the city/town council or the school committee. At the state level, you can vote to elect a governor or someone to represent your city/town in the General Assembly. At the national level, you can vote to elect a president, senator, or congressman.

Register to vote

You can register to vote if you are a United States citizen and are a resident of the city or town where you want to vote. You can fill out all of the paperwork to register to vote when you are 16, but you must be 18 to vote in an election. You must complete a Rhode Island Voter Registration Form and return the completed form to the correct official in your city or town or in state government. To download a voter registration form and find out where to send your completed form, visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.ri.gov/elections/voters/register>

As a person with a disability, it is important that your voice and concerns be heard. People who are elected make decisions about policies and laws that could affect you and the services you get.

You don't have to wait until you are 18 to let your voice be heard. There are other ways to get involved while you are in high school. Ask your IEP team about participating in your school's student council or Model Legislature, taking civics classes, attending the annual Dare to Dream conference, or learning more about the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Ways to learn about politics:

- ▶ Find out who is running in the election and check to see if the candidate has a website. Check the candidate's website for any information about a position on rights and accommodations for people with disabilities.
- ▶ Call, write, or email a person who is running in an election. Candidates are usually very willing to send you information about themselves.
- ▶ If the candidate has a campaign office, visit the office or make an appointment to talk to the candidate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON YOUR CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS CHECK OUT WWW.ELECTIONS.STATE.RI.US



Dare to Dream Student Leadership Program

Rhode Island transition age students can participate in the Dare to Dream Leadership Program. This program teaches you about how to become a leader and includes a special conference at the end.

Dare to Dream is for youth with special needs or disabilities and helps them learn how to be involved and productive at school, at home, or in the community. It will also help you learn more about topics that interest you. Ask your teacher, principal, guidance counselor, or local Regional Transition Center (see page 25) for information on how to get involved.

At the end of the program, you can go to the Dare to Dream Student Leadership Conference. It is a conference for students and is organized by students. One student who led a workshop at a Dare to Dream conference said:

"YOUTH SHOULD ATTEND OR PARTICIPATE IN DARE TO DREAM BECAUSE THE WHOLE DAY JUST GIVES THE YOUTH SO MUCH CONFIDENCE AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS. THEY LEARN THAT THEY ALL CAN HAVE A VOICE AND HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE THAT VOICE. IT'S A FUN DAY FILLED WITH LEARNING, TALKING, SHARING STORIES, MAKING CONNECTIONS, MAKING FRIENDS, AND MEETING DIFFERENT PEOPLE WHO KNOW WHAT YOU FEEL LIKE."

***KELSEY
SHEA HIGH SCHOOL***

What are the benefits of going to the Dare to Dream Leadership Conference?

- ▶ You will meet Rhode Island students from different schools.
- ▶ You will get to visit the University of Rhode Island.
- ▶ You will hear inspirational stories from students who are like you.
- ▶ You can choose workshops that interest you, and the workshops are presented by other students.
- ▶ You can learn from other students and from the experiences that they share.
- ▶ You learn how to advocate for yourself after you graduate from high school from someone your own age.
- ▶ You learn how to let other people know what you want.
- ▶ You learn how to talk about your experiences with other people.

What are the benefits of helping to plan and organize the Dare to Dream Leadership Conference?

- ▶ You can choose what topic you want to talk about in your workshop and the best way to present the information. You can use a skit, a video, or a hands-on activity to make it interesting for the audience.
- ▶ You learn how to work as a member of a team because you will work with other students from your school to do your presentation.
- ▶ You can inspire or motivate other students.
- ▶ You will learn about teamwork, public speaking, and time management. These are all skills you will need in adulthood.
- ▶ You can learn more about a topic that interests you.
- ▶ You may be able to count your work on a presentation toward your graduation requirements.

Joining the Dare to Dream program might sound a little scary, but it is not. **Be brave and bold.** Dare to Dream is about you learning that it's normal to struggle and it's okay to be yourself. At Dare to Dream, you can be honest and you will not be judged.

If you want to learn more about Dare to Dream, contact deb.golding@health.ri.gov or visit www.ritap.org



Leadership

AFTER READING THIS WORKBOOK AND DOING THE ACTIVITIES, CAN YOU SAY YOU ARE A LEADER? PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT LEADERSHIP.

1. Do you feel like you could advocate for yourself now?

.....
.....

2. Are you interested in the Dare to Dream Student Leadership Program? Why?

.....
.....

3. What are some ways you can be a leader at school?

.....
.....

4. What are some ways you can be a leader in your community?

.....
.....

5. Would you like your school to have a leadership program? Would you join the program?

.....
.....

6. How would you start a leadership program at your school?

.....
.....

7. Would you like to help younger students learn about being a self-advocate and a good leader?

.....
.....

ACTIVITY

I Am Poem

COMPLETE THIS POEM BY FOLLOWING THE DIRECTIONS IN THE PARENTHESIS.

I AM (TWO SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS YOU HAVE)

I WONDER (SOMETHING YOU ARE CURIOUS ABOUT)

I HEAR (AN IMAGINARY SOUND)

I SEE (AN IMAGINARY SIGHT)

I WANT (A DESIRE)

I AM (THE FIRST LINE OF THE POEM REPEATED)

I PRETEND (SOMETHING YOU PRETEND TO DO)

I FEEL (A FEELING ABOUT SOMETHING IMAGINARY)

I TOUCH (AN IMAGINARY TOUCH)

I WORRY (SOMETHING THAT WORRIES YOU)

I CRY (SOMETHING THAT MAKES YOU SAD)

I AM (THE FIRST LINE OF THE POEM REPEATED)

I UNDERSTAND (SOMETHING YOU KNOW IS TRUE)

I SAY (SOMETHING YOU BELIEVE IN)

I DREAM (SOMETHING YOU DREAM ABOUT)

I TRY (SOMETHING YOU MAKE AN EFFORT TO DO)

I HOPE (SOMETHING YOU HOPE FOR)

I AM (THE FIRST LINE OF THE POEM REPEATED)



3 Capitol Hill, Providence RI 02908
Health Information Line: 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711
www.health.ri.gov



Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

Elizabeth H. Roberts
Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH
Director of Health