



*connections*

A guide to transition planning  
for parents of children with a developmental disability

Toronto and York Regions  
May 2007



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For parents of children with a developmental disability**

**Written by:  
Rae Roebuck and Judy Coultres-MacLeod  
First Leadership Limited**

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Finally we would like to thank the parents of children with developmental disabilities who have shared their experiences with us and allowed the inclusion of their stories in “Connections.” Their time and insight was invaluable to us in making this document helpful to the many other parents with children just beginning the journey to adult life.

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## **PART 3: YOUR INFORMATION**

## **PART 1: UNDERSTANDING TRANSITIONS**

## **PART 1: UNDERSTANDING TRANSITIONS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

*“Connections: A Guide to Transition Planning”* has been developed to help you – the parents of a child with a developmental disability in Toronto and York Regions – as your child makes the transition from school life to adulthood.

This guide has been written to provide you with information on transition planning and to identify some of the issues you need to think about. It will also provide you with information on accessing services in each of Toronto and York Region that may be useful to you as you begin to plan for your child’s life beyond school.

This guide has three parts:

- Part 1 provides information on Transition Planning;
- Part 2 provides information on Tools & Resources that may help you in the transition planning process; and
- Part 3 provides you with space to collect your information – your records, certificates, copies of your transition plan, contact information etc.

An initial thought...

As you will read throughout this document, it is important to prepare for your child’s transition from the school system to life as an adult. Having a transition plan in place however, is no guarantee that all the supports and services you have identified in your plan will be available to you in the adult system. The reality is that your child is moving from a system of entitlement, (the public education system) to a system of limited and finite resources (adult developmental services).

You will be challenged to be creative, think outside the box of the traditional support system and find innovative ways to acquire the supports and services you and your child need. There are many parents that have travelled this path before you and they can be a resource for you. Some of their ideas are shared in this guide.

The information that follows is intended to provide you with a variety of resources, tools and sources of information to help you find the right mix of supports as your child takes the next major step in his or her life.



It is hoped that “*Connections*” will help you and your child get involved by giving you information, ideas and tools to start planning for this time of change. You can begin using some of these tools as early as when your child reaches the age of 9. Even though this may seem early there are many activities that can be completed and reinforced, or continued throughout the adolescent years in preparation for the move to adult life. Preparing early and being well organized will help you make this transition a smoother process. Transition planning will take time and hard work, but seeing your child make a confident step to adult life will be worth the effort.

### **This Guide is for You and Your Child**



While the information is aimed primarily at you – the parents – much of what is in this guide needs to be considered and completed with the full involvement of your child to the extent that they are able. Family members and other important people providing supports (teachers, friends and service providers) may find it useful as well. This guide is intended to provide you with information through a variety of practical tools, checklists, worksheets and innovative ideas that you and your child can use together to help make your way through this time of transition.

#### **Please Note...**

Throughout this guide, the word “parent” not only refers to biological parents but is meant to include any adult with the responsibility of raising a young person with a developmental disability, for example, a legal guardian. The use of the word “families” is meant to be inclusive of all members of the extended family that play an important part in the life of the young person. This may include parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.

As a parent, you naturally have dreams and aspirations for your child. You want them to finish school, find a job, find a comfortable place to live and have a circle of friends to support them as they enter the next phase of their life. When raising a child with developmental disabilities, figuring out options and making decisions to make their hopes and dreams a reality is often much more complex and requires a great deal more effort and planning. This transition is going to happen whether

you plan for it or not. It is to your advantage to begin thinking about it early and use this opportunity to make a very real and positive impact on your child's future.

An important part of transition planning is to involve your child in the process in whatever way and to whatever extent is possible. For example, that can mean including them in meetings, asking them what they want to do and encouraging them to relay their responses through whatever communication method they are comfortable with. Each of the tools in this guide can be adapted to fit the circumstances and the unique abilities of each child.

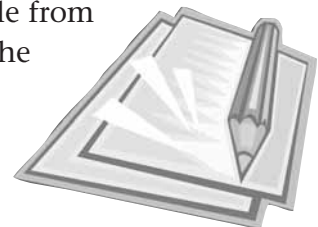
Just as each child is unique in their own way, so too are families. Families have different cultures, backgrounds, beliefs and values. Therefore, the way each family approaches a situation, makes decisions or relates to each other as a group will be different as well. Nonetheless, every family needs a transition plan. So take the suggestions included in this guide and make adjustments as needed to ensure the best fit for your family situation.

#### What does involvement mean?

In many places throughout the guide, it is suggested that you involve your child in planning and in making decisions. It is recognized that each child has their own unique set of abilities, strengths and challenges and the level of involvement for each child will be defined differently. Some may be comfortable leading activities identified in their plans while others will simply indicate their intentions with a smile. Either way, this is how involvement is defined...individually, and based on a unique set of abilities!

### About the Information in this Guide

There are many transition planning guides and resources available from a wide variety of sources. Several provinces and many states in the United States have researched and developed transition guides. "Connections" is based on the research and information provided in several of these transition guides; in particular the document developed in British Columbia by the Ministry of Children and Family Development "*Your Future Now - A Transition Planning & Resource Guide for Youth with Special Needs and Their Families*". All of these sources provide a wealth of information on transition planning and much of this information is available on the internet. Reference to these other documents is provided for you in Part 2 - the resource section of this guide.



While there is a lot of interesting information and ideas to follow in this guide, do not feel you need to read the document cover to cover in the first sitting. Read it a bit at a time, make notes and highlight activities that you can easily start with. Not all of the worksheets and suggestions for planning will work for everyone. You are encouraged to make use of the tools that make the most sense for you and your particular family circumstances.

**Get a Quick Start!**

If you would like to get started right away before reading all of this document, turn to Section 7 “Now You are Ready to Start”. In that section you will find a summary of the information in Part 1 and some tips and tools to get you going.

“Connections” has been designed to fit into a binder so you can add and remove pages as you go. There is also a tab at the end of the guide labelled “Your Information”. Use this section to store in one place important information about your child and information on resources or services that you are interested in. Remove the worksheets and copy them or download fresh ones from the internet. As you go through the steps of transition planning, particularly the reviewing and updating of your plan, you will likely use and reuse some worksheets over and over. The types of activities involved in transition planning will likely be repeated many times over and could easily be continued well into adulthood as interests and preferences change.

Connections can be found and downloaded from the web at [www.dst0.com](http://www.dst0.com) (look under “Helpful Resources” then “Publications”), at [www.reena.org](http://www.reena.org) (look under “About Reena” then “Publications”) or [www.centraleast.info/index.htm](http://www.centraleast.info/index.htm) (look under “York” then “News”).

**Tell Us...**

This guide is intended to help you navigate your way through the transition process. Your feedback on the guide is important. Keep track of any comments, suggestions, and/or questions you may have as you use this guide and let us know what you think.

Please send any feedback to: [Connections@firstleadership.com](mailto:Connections@firstleadership.com)

## 2. ABOUT TRANSITION PLANNING

This section describes what transition planning is all about by talking about the following:

- Best practices – a discussion of things that makes transition planning work well;
- Person-centred planning – an approach to including your child in transition planning;
- Getting an early start – a discussion on the importance of getting a handle on transition planning in the pre-teen years; and
- Managing the process – pointing out that much of the responsibility for transition planning rests with parents.

Transitions are about change. The transition process is about looking ahead to the future and preparing for one of the most significant times in your child's life – becoming an adult. For parents this may be a time of many emotions. As your child grows up, you may suddenly realize that they are becoming their own person with likes, dislikes, and their own view of the world.

Exploring new interests, getting to know the community, starting new programs, working with new service providers, establishing relationships with new caregivers, leaving familiar surroundings and friends and making new ones are some of the changes that lie ahead. Planning for these changes takes time and so an early start is important. Realistically, it will require a lot of preparation to develop a plan for the future that is positive and practical and that best reflects the preferences and interests of your child.

The time of transition planning is about building your child's self-reliance skills. Your natural instinct is to protect your child and as a parent of a child with developmental disabilities that instinct is likely even stronger. However, it is important to not underestimate your child's abilities. Find ways to set expectations for your child and provide them with lots of encouragement to do their best. Encourage them to expect the best from themselves. Throughout the planning exercise, it will be important to recognize opportunities to strengthen your child's independence and their ability to begin advocating on their own behalf – a skill they will need as they become an adult.



Transition planning will mean making many decisions with your child about various aspects of their life. It is important for you to begin preparing for the time when your child is no longer in school everyday. You need to consider things like living arrangements, community programs, employment opportunities, further education opportunities, health care, recreation and social activities. The transition planning activities will help you look at each of the areas noted above to identify your child's strengths and opportunities for growth, identify things they want to pursue and how they should go about pursuing them.

Not all of these changes need to happen at once. In fact, today many adolescents with or without developmental disabilities continue to live at home with their parents while attending post-secondary programs or after entering the workforce. However, the difference is that as a parent of a child with a development disability you may continue with many parental responsibilities that other parents pass on to their children as they reach adulthood.

Transition is about planning and preparing for the changes that adult life will bring and then having your child do the things that other young adults do. While some young adults with developmental disabilities may require supports and services from their community to do those things, adult life involves much more than receiving services. Becoming an adult is about participating in community life and being a citizen – a contributing member of society.

The graphic features the text 'tip #1' in a cursive font, set against a background of a cloudy sky. The text is white and stands out against the greyish-blue tones of the clouds.

More information on Best Practices is available in Part 2: Tools & Resources under Tool 1.

### **Best Practices in Transition Planning**

Best practices can be defined as programs, initiatives or activities which are considered leading edge and can serve as exceptional models for others to follow. Research studies on best practices in transition planning typically identify a similar list of outcomes – person-centred or person-directed planning, including others in developing the plan, identifying a coordinator,

and monitoring and updating the plan. Given their importance, many of these issues will also be discussed throughout the document.

In addition, some good examples of best practices research can be found in British Columbia at the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Alberta Central Region Community Board, and the “Transitions from High School to Adult Life” project completed by the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living. In the United States, several good references are available through various states, including Washington, California, North Dakota and Michigan.



### tip # 2

More information on resources in other jurisdictions is provided in Part 2: Tools & Resources under Transition Planning Resources, Transition Planning Guides and Other Transition Planning Resources.

## Person-Centred Planning

Your child will be at the centre of developing their transition plan for their future. You and others close to your child need to find ways to have your child take a leadership role in planning and decision-making throughout the process to the extent that they are able. Involving your child in this way is called *person-centred planning*.

This approach to planning is about understanding your child, their gifts, their dreams, their interests and their preferences. It is about focusing on enabling qualities – the positives – to bring plans to action. Person-centred planning is based on the belief that each individual has strengths, has the ability to express preferences and make contributions and choices. Again, it is recognized that each child’s ability to contribute to the planning process will be different but every contribution in whatever form is important.

You may already be familiar with person-centred planning from other programs or activities as it is an approach that is not unique to transition planning. Using a person-centred planning approach to develop the transition plan is key to ensuring that your child will be the driving force throughout, with you, the parent, playing a significant role as well.

Much has been written about person-centred planning and there are many tools and exercises available to help those in your network better understand your child. Of particular interest are two such tools – MAPS (Making Action Plans) and PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope). MAPS is a planning process that takes a look at a person’s story – their history – to understand them and help them develop a plan to move in the direction of their dreams. PATH takes a point in the future and works back to the present, identifying the steps needed in between to make a dream a reality.

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Further information about these tools is available at [www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com). They are also identified in Part 2: Tools & Resources under Transition Planning Resources, Person-Centred Planning Tools.

Much of the person-centred literature suggests that families should engage a facilitator to help through the planning process as is the case with the MAPS and PATH tools. The facilitator does not have to be a service professional but it is helpful if it is someone who has been trained in the use of person-centred planning tools. The Central Alberta Community Board has developed a set of person-centred planning tools so that families can engage in the planning activities and manage the process on their own. Many individuals, families, and service providers have been involved in conceptualizing, designing, piloting, and evaluating the person-centered planning process now being implemented in communities across the Central Alberta region. A person-centred planning tool and guidebook have been developed; a literature review and personal stories of success

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The Alberta documents can all be accessed at [www.pdd.org/Central/resources/personcp.shtml](http://www.pdd.org/Central/resources/personcp.shtml) and the Ontario document is available at [www.individualizedfunding.ca](http://www.individualizedfunding.ca). More information is available in Part 2: Tools & Resources under Transition Planning Resources, Person-Centred Planning Tools.

are also available for review. In Ontario, the Individualized Funding Coalition recently developed a person-directed planning guide, also available in a plain language version.

Involving your child from the beginning to create a plan that best reflects their interests and preferences is more likely to enhance the outcomes for your child and lead to the development and implementation of a more appropriate plan for the future. You should involve your child in ways that make the most sense based on their abilities and circumstances. Person-centred planning is a great way for your child to take ownership of their plan and to feel in control of their lives. It also provides them with an opportunity to begin advocating for themselves, an important skill in building self-reliance.

### **Get an Early Start**

Planning for an event helps to identify the things that need to be done ahead of time, prepare for what is coming and think of alternative strategies if things do not go exactly as planned. Transition planning will help your child identify opportunities and experiences during their school years to help prepare them for life as an adult.



One of the most important aspects of transition planning is getting an early start. By the time your child reaches the age of nine you can begin with casual conversations about what they want to be when they grow up. Talking about the future with your child will help them become more comfortable with the whole notion of change. You will need to prepare your child well in advance to make sure they are ready to be involved and make decisions about the future. This is an important time for them and one they may not be ready to participate in at first. Planning allows both you and your child to prepare for the change ahead, to identify concerns and questions and become emotionally prepared for the move to adult life.

Through the education system, at age 14, your child will begin planning for the future through the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and a Transition Plan. These plans will identify specific actions and activities that will help move your child closer to achieving their goals for the future. Further details about transition planning in the education system in Ontario are discussed in Section 4.



However, you don't need to wait for the education system to get started. You can begin by keeping track of basic information about your child (reports, records, certificates of achievement etc.) and your family to share with various individuals as you go through the planning process.

Having your child help you complete these transition planning documents that are found in Part 2 of this guide and discussed in Section 3 is a great way to introduce them to becoming involved in the planning process.

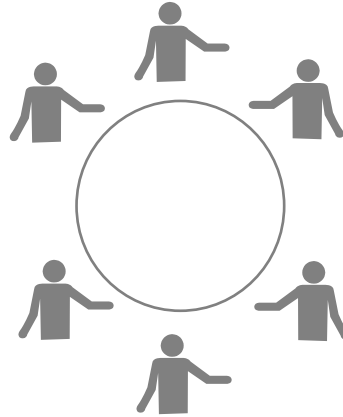
### **Manage the Process**

Transition planning is a partnership involving you, your child, other family members, teachers, friends, community and adult service providers, employers and any other individuals with a vested interest in your child. As parents, your role will involve taking charge and effectively coordinating a set of activities to develop a transition plan that best reflects the interests and preferences of your child.

Transition planning is not an easy task and it is likely to be overwhelming at times. But you do not have to face it alone. Early on you will want to surround yourself with people who can help you. These people will become your network of support that know and have a vested interest in your child. Your network should be energizing and creative and will likely include other members of your family, friends, peers, teachers, and/or community support workers and even other parents of children with developmental disabilities. Find ways to give people in your network the opportunity to enjoy hospitality and to become familiar with one another. This will help build strong and effective relationships and help build commitment to your child. Many of the individuals in your network of support may become part of your transition planning team – individuals you select to help you put your plan together. While you are your child's best advocate, there are many other people involved in your lives – both known to you and new to you – that can provide a wealth of information from an objective and fresh perspective. Section 3 provides more details on establishing this team.

You will encounter transition planning in the education system; it may also come up through your involvement in the service system; and you need to be thinking about transition planning activities at home as well. However, this planning process is not going to happen on its own and you cannot wait for someone else to start the ball rolling. It is going to

take your hard work and effort to do this. You will need to coordinate your efforts across the community and education systems and build the most effective transition planning process for you and your child. The more prepared and knowledgeable you are, the more ready you will be to take charge and coordinate these efforts successfully.

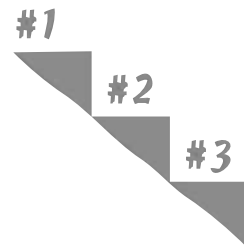


### 3. THE STEPS IN TRANSITION PLANNING

This section suggests a series of steps to follow in getting the planning process started. The steps include the following:

- Step 1: Create a Vision and Build the Profile;
- Step 2: Build the Team;
- Step 3: Set Goals;
- Step 4: Action Plan; and
- Step 5: Updating the Plan.

A number of steps are outlined below to help you get started on your planning. The steps are sequentially numbered but since it is your plan, you can carry them out in any order that makes the most sense to you. For example, you may want to build your transition team first and then have the team help develop the profiles.



The worksheets identified in each of the following steps have been adapted (with permission) from materials developed in British Columbia by the Ministry of Children and Family Development “*Your Future Now. A Transition Planning & Resource Guide for Youth with Special Needs and Their Families*”. They are intended to guide you through the development of your transition plan. Use the worksheets, reuse them, modify them – they are meant to provide you with examples of the type of information that may be helpful to you as you identify your specific path to the future.

If you do not find these exercises suit your needs, there are other examples of transition planning guides identified in Part 2 under Transition Resources. Take a look at these other on-line guides and find one that is a good fit for you and your child. The important thing is that you do get started, and not necessarily which tool is used.

When beginning the worksheets, encourage your child to be involved in completing the exercises to the best of their ability. Support them and have them seek assistance from you, their friends or other family members. The more involved your child is the more likely the plan will reflect their interests and preferences. Having helped in making these decisions will give them a sense of accomplishment and confidence as they take a step towards a life of more independence as an adult.

## Step 1: Create a Vision and Build the Profile

Building the profile is about gathering information on your child, your family and your family situation. You will need to share this information with the transition planning team since not everyone will be as familiar with your circumstances as you are. This will help the team in making the right decisions throughout the transition planning process.

The first exercise is about creating a vision for your child. This is an exercise that you may revisit several times as your child grows and their preferences and interests change as they experience new and different things.

### tip #5

Tool 5 in Part2: Tools & Resources provides a set of vision developing questions that can be used at age nine and repeated as your child goes through the adolescent years.

#### ONE PARENT'S ADVICE... ON A VISION

*“Develop a vision for the future for your child. Make it your own vision and do not be limited by what others may say or what you think you may get. Draw support for your vision from every possible direction around you. Don't be afraid to call upon others for help and input. Secure the support you need for an ordinary life for your child. And remember to get a network for yourself as a parent - this is a difficult journey.”*

You should consider developing a vision as early as possible. This vision, when broken down into yearly goals, becomes very helpful in developing the transition plan. Establishing a vision is a great opportunity to set expectations for your child – realistic expectations based on their strengths, interests and preferences.

The vision exercise is meant to find out what your child is interested in, where their strengths and abilities lie and what they want to do in the future. This exercise should clearly outline what your child can do, what they are good at doing and what they like doing. Taking this approach

can help make the experience more positive and will likely result in having your child perceived more positively as well.

**FROM A PARENT**

*“When my daughter was a very young child we were focussed on her problems and looking for the right “fixes”. We tried to get her into a specialized school and she was not accepted. In retrospect, this was the best thing that ever happened since it started us down a path of inclusion.”*

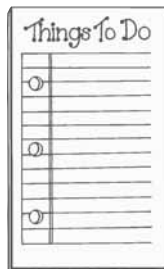
This early experience and others that followed really helped shape a change in this family’s philosophy. Instead of continuing to see problems and looking for fixes, they began to see gifts, what their daughter could bring to others and looked for ways to include her in all activities. This is not to say that your child’s challenges should be ignored – they should just not be the focus of the plan nor the basis of its development. Rather, they can be incorporated into expectations or identified as the needs to be supported throughout the transition period.

*tip #6*

More information on MAPS and PATH can be accessed at [www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com)

The vision information can be accessed at [www.pdd.org/docs/cent/PCP\\_811\\_Jan19.pdf](http://www.pdd.org/docs/cent/PCP_811_Jan19.pdf). Further details on this and other tools available from the Central Alberta Community Board can be found in Part 2: Tools & Resources under Person-Centred Planning.

In establishing a vision for your child, there are other tools that can be helpful as well. Both the MAPS and PATH activities are useful to identify the unique preferences, experiences, skills and support needs of your child. The Central Alberta Community Board tools may also be helpful in identifying a vision and building a profile of your child.



Next, you will develop your child’s profile which builds on the information identified in the vision. The list below identifies the type of information you should be gathering about your child as you develop their profile.

## Gathering Information about Your Child

- Identify people in your child's life, such as family members, friends, cultural associations, school personnel, social workers, current service providers and community members.
- Discuss where your child spends his or her time.
- Identify things that others see as strengths that contribute to his or her positive characteristics.
- Identify things that people see as areas where growth is needed.
- Discuss the kinds of choices your child makes.
- Identify preferences, including things that motivate your child and create happiness, and non-preferences, including things that do not work for them, that create frustration and unhappiness.
- Discuss personal goals and dreams.
- Identify the most vital priorities to work on now (2-12 months) and in the future (1-5 years).
- Discuss opportunities, including things or people that can help your child achieve his or her personal goals and dreams.
- Discuss obstacles or barriers, including things or people that are getting in the way of your child achieving his or her personal goals and dreams.
- Identify strategies to help your child overcome obstacles or barriers and achieve personal goals and dreams.

Now, you will need to identify information about your family. This information should include services that you currently use, what you anticipate needing when your child reaches the end of school and the ways you can help your child reach their goals for the future. The following questions are things to consider in developing a family vision and completing a family profile

## Family Profile

- What supports and services do you use now and will they continue when your child reaches the age of 18 or 21?
- What additional or different supports and services do you anticipate needing in the future?
- Will your child continue to live at home and for how long? Will you require other living arrangements for your child?
- Do you have the means – financial and otherwise – to support your child in adulthood?
- What financial planning do you need to consider?

These are things you will need to include in your transition plan and are as important as making arrangements for your child.

### tip #7

Your child, with appropriate assistance, can complete his or her profile by using the format provided in Tool 7 found in Part 2: Tools & Resources.

You can complete your family profile by using use the format provided in Tool 8 in Part 2: Tools & Resources.

## Step 2: Build the Team

While you will be expected to be very involved in the development of your child's transition plan, you do not need to do it alone. Build a team for your transition plan by seeking the support of people who can help you to set your child's goals for the future and then help in making those goals a reality. Choose from people who are part of your network of supports or circle of friends – people you are comfortable with. It is suggested that your team have at least two members and no more than eight – any more may be overwhelming.

Some individuals you may want to consider in addition to yourself and your child can include the following:

- Other family members;
- Parents who have recently gone through a transition plan themselves;
- Teachers;
- Community workers;
- Friends;
- Peers;
- Employers; or
- Other members from the community.

Some members of the team may be involved with the planning process from the beginning. Others may be involved on a limited basis.

It may be helpful to ask yourself the following questions to identify the most appropriate members of your network or team:

- Who knows your child best?
- Who does your child trust and feel comfortable around?
- Who does your child look to for advice and support?
- Who would your child like to help him or her with their transition from school to adulthood?
- How can these people best help?

It will be important for you to involve people that know your child well and that may also have a vested interest in your child. You will want to include people that have a positive outlook and can see the gifts and strengths your child has to offer. Think about including those that will network and advocate on your child's behalf in much the same way as you will yourself. Remember, creativity is going to be a key to the success of



your transition plan. The education system and the service system may not be able to support you in the way that you expect. So it is important to involve people on your team who can help develop innovative ways to support your child as they make their way to adulthood.

Once you have established your team, you will need to think about who could take on the role of coordinator. This person will be a key contact for the team throughout the process and will take the lead in organizing the activities of the team.

### tip # 8

Tool 2 in Part 2: Tools & Resources provides a suggested list of roles and responsibilities for members of the transition team.

You will likely be responsible for most of the work involved in the planning process so surround yourself with the right people. Use your network of supports most effectively and gain from the experience of others. Seek out parents that have been through this process before and involve them in your planning efforts. Find a mentor for your child – a peer that has recently made the transition to adulthood who can support your child as they go through the steps in developing their plan.

### tip # 9

Tool 6 in Part 2: Tools & Resources section provides a template for keeping track of your team members contact information.

## Step 3: Set Goals

Once the profiles are completed for your child and your family, you will need to consider developing goals. Goals are an important step in the process since they will help identify the kinds of experiences your child should pursue through their high school years and the skills they will develop as a result.

There are a few things to consider in developing goals with your child. Write them down so you can tell if your child has achieved the goal(s). Goals should also be positive and possible. It may also be helpful to separate them into short-term and longer-term timeframes. Examples for each are identified below:

**Short-term goal:** Mary will find a volunteer position in the community by the end of April.

**Long-term goal:** Mary will have a part-time paying job by the end of next year.

**Short-term goal:** Adam will remain at Middletown Collegiate until age 21 to maximize learning of literacy, numeracy and life skills.

**Long-term goal:** Adam will continue to practise and maintain his literacy and numeracy skills after leaving school and to further develop life skills.

Establishing goals is a good way to address a fear your child may have about the future and it will give them a chance to talk about it. They can become more comfortable with something that they have concerns about through a number of small but progressive steps.

Following is a list of questions you can use to consider as part of the goal setting exercise.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

<b>Goal Category</b>	<b>Question</b>
Health	What will their health and medical needs be? How will they live a healthy lifestyle?
Housing/Living Arrangements	Where will they be living? Will they be living at home, in a supported living arrangement, in a group home, or in their own apartment?
Finance/Money	What about money? What will be their source of income? Will they require assistance with banking? If so, who will help?
Friendship/ Social Life	What will their social life look like?
Transportation	What will their transportation needs look like? Do they need to use adapted transit?
Post-secondary	Will they go on to further their education?
Education/Training	Will they go to a university or college? Will they take a training course?
Employment	What will they do after school is finished? Will they get a job? Will they go to a day program?
Recreation	What will they do for recreation? Will they join a sports team? Will they take an art class?
Community Involvement	What will they do during their spare time? Will they volunteer? What about spiritual and cultural activities?
Legal/Advocacy	What will their legal needs be? Who will help them stand up for their rights?



### tip #10

Tool 9 in Part 2: Tools & Resources may help you to identify your child's goals for the future.

## Step 4: Action Plan

Now that you have identified the pieces of the plan in the previous three steps, the action plan will help you pull it all together.



### tip #11

Tool 10 in Part 2: Tools & Resources provides a sample template that you may want to use in developing your transition plan. Other samples are available in the guides listed in the Part 2: Tools & Resources under Transition Planning Guides in Canada and United States.

First, your transition team will review the goals set in Step 3 and the potential supports and services identified to help in achieving these goals. In doing this, your team should consider the following questions:

- What are your child's goals?
- What skills or behaviours does your child need to learn to achieve these goals?
- What local programs, services and supports are available to support your child's goals?
- What responsibilities must you, the school, adult services, cultural and community agencies, and your family assume in order for your child to reach his or her goals?
- What are the gaps or barriers within current programs and services that must be addressed?

Then, the team is ready to identify the tasks that need to be completed to achieve the goals. Members of the team will also need to assume responsibility for these tasks to ensure that they are carried out. These actions

need to be fairly detailed so it is clear what needs to be done, by when and by whom.

The next step will involve reviewing the tasks identified to make sure that they are consistent with the vision developed for your child.

### tip #12

Tool 11 in Part 2: Tools and Resources provides a chart to summarize the actions and assigned responsibilities. It can then be used to review your progress at the next transition planning meeting.

There are many activities that can be completed along the way, other than those specifically identified in the transition plan that can be used to help make progress towards your child's goals. Many of these activities are ways to establish and reinforce self-reliance skills for your child. These activities will also be important to keep track of as you progress through the adolescent years.

Not every item will be relevant to every individual. Use the checklist as a guide to provide you with ideas and make adjustments to better fit your circumstances.

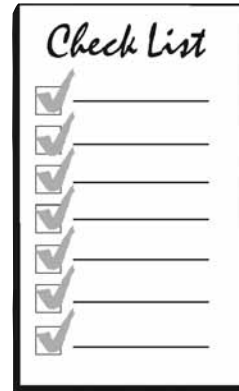
### tip #13

Tool 4 in Part 2: Tools & Resources provides a checklist of items ranging from birth through adolescence that can be helpful in moving your child towards his or her vision of the future.

## Step 5: Updating the Plan

One of the most important steps is reviewing and updating your plan on a regular basis. One of the tasks of the transition coordinator is to schedule meetings to keep track of tasks that have been assigned and progress towards their completion. These meetings become an important opportunity to review the goals and ensure that they continue to be consistent with your child's interests and preferences.

In reviewing the goals and the tasks assigned to each, it may be important to revise the goals and make them more specific as needed. As your child moves through their adolescence, their interests may become more defined and so too should their goals. An opportunity provided through a work experience program at school or a volunteer position in the community may help them to more clearly set the directions they want to take as an adult. Use these times of review to ensure the direction in the original transition plan is still consistent with your child's current interests and preferences.



A graphic titled "Check List" in a cursive font. It consists of seven horizontal lines, each preceded by a small square checkbox. The checkboxes are arranged in a vertical column on the left side of the lines.

## 4. TRANSITION PLANNING AT SCHOOL

This section outlines the following information on transition planning in the education system:

- The school's role – what you can expect from the education system in planning for your child's future;
- The value of work experience and co-operative education;
- Your role in the school transition plan – how you can utilize the education system resources for your transition plan;
- Being an active participant – the importance of being involved with your child in the education process; and
- Staying in touch – the importance of being aware of what is happening with the education process and how you can influence the opportunities available to your child by being involved.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has developed a process to help students with the transition to work, further education and community living. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be completed for each student with special education needs that details the academic expectations for each year of school. Research indicates that having both the parents and child involved in the development of these plans can significantly improve the likelihood of a successful transition. The following information provides an overview of the process outlined by the Ministry of Education and the role you should take in making your way through the school transition process and integrating it with your own family transition plan.



### The School's Role

In Ontario, the Education Act, states that principals are responsible for ensuring that an IEP is developed for each student who has been identified as exceptional. If your child is 14 years of age or older, the IEP must also include a transition plan to appropriate post-secondary activities; for example, work, further education and/or community living.

The Principal will likely assign responsibility for coordinating the development, implementation and monitoring of your child's IEP to one person – possibly the classroom teacher. The Ministry of Education recommends that a team approach should be used throughout the IEP process. In reviewing the following information you will see the similarities between the planning process in school and the person-centred transition planning process described earlier.

The following is a list of important information that will be included in your child's IEP:

- their strengths and needs;
- relevant assessment data;
- medical/health information;
- your child's current level of achievement in each program area;
- goals and specific expectations for the student;
- program modifications or the changes required to grade-level expectations in the Ontario curriculum;
- accommodations or supports and services that will help your child access the curriculum and demonstrate learning;
- special education services provided to your child;
- assessment strategies for reviewing your child's achievements and progress;
- regular updates, showing dates, results and recommendations; and
- a transition plan (if your child is over the age of 14).

There are five phases to the IEP process which include the following:

1. gathering information;
2. setting the direction;
3. developing the plan;
4. carrying out the planned activities; and
5. reviewing and updating the IEP.



Most IEPs follow the timetable of a school year or semester. They are developed in early fall and cover the time up to the end of June or the end of a semester session. The IEP process involves ongoing review, evaluation and adjustment on a term-by-term basis. The IEP process is curriculum-oriented which means it should focus on how your child is expected to progress through the Ontario curriculum, with or without any modification of expectations.

The development of the transition plan through the education system should be consistent with the directions identified for your child in their IEP. The goals and action plan in the IEP should inform the development of the transition plan to ensure the actions in each are moving towards a common objective. You will need to ensure that both plans are consistent with your child's interests and preferences.

The graphic for 'Tip #14' has a background of a cloudy sky. The text 'tip #14' is written in a large, black, cursive font. Below the graphic, there is a light grey rectangular box containing text.

### *tip* #14

The Ontario Ministry of Education, the Toronto and York District School Boards and the Toronto and York Catholic District School Boards have developed guides and templates for parents to assist with educational and transition planning. These can be accessed through website links which are identified in Part 2: Tools & Resources, Transition Planning Resources under Education Planning Documents.

These websites also include information on Special Needs Programs in Ontario and for each School Board.

## **The Value of Work Experience**

As you participate in the development of the IEP, you will need to identify opportunities that will give your child a broad range of experiences to help explore their strengths, abilities and interests. Co-operative education and other forms of work experience programs available through the education system are an important part of developing a transition plan for your child. Co-operative (co-op) education, work experience, and school-work transition programs allow your child to experience a variety of opportunities and to learn more about themselves and the world of work.

Co-op education and work experience programs will require a written learning plan that covers their work placement goals and activities. To

ensure the work experience is a meaningful one, the learning plan for the work experience program must be linked and consistent with the directions identified in the IEP – the student’s goals, strengths and needs. It will be important for you or your transition coordinator to be the link between your child’s teacher and the co-op education teacher to ensure you make the most of this opportunity.

The graphic for 'Tip #15' features the text 'tip #15' in a large, elegant cursive font. The background is a light grey rectangle with a soft, white, cloud-like pattern at the top.

Further information on the Co-operative Education and other forms of Experiential Learning Program can be accessed through the Ministry of Education website at: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/coop/cooped.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/coop/cooped.pdf)

## **Your Role in the School Transition Plan**

As a parent, you have a significant role to play in the development of your child’s IEP and their transition plan. Being involved with your child means you have a better chance of developing a successful plan consistent with your child’s vision for the future.

While the school system has established requirements, standards and guidelines for developing the IEP and transition plan, the shape of the process will likely be different in each school. Regardless of the process, parents and students should be consulted and involved in the development of the IEP and transition plan. You should be prepared to be involved in the process to ensure you are receiving the supports most appropriate for you and your child.

Be prepared to ask lots of questions. Speak to the teacher, find out what the process will be, who will be leading the activities, who else will be involved, what will be developed and when. Make sure the teacher knows that you and your child want to be included in decision-making throughout the process. You will need to ensure that the IEP and transition planning processes are integrated and consistent with each other and moving in a direction consistent with your child’s preferences and interests.

## tip #16

The York Region District School Board has developed a helpful four page summary of the IEP process for parents that is accessible at: [www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/w/schools/speced/SpecEdPlan-E-IEPGuide.pdf](http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/w/schools/speced/SpecEdPlan-E-IEPGuide.pdf)

If you have started your own transition planning activities at home, there should be an overlap with the information being developed through the education system, for example, identifying your child's strengths, interests, dreams and areas to work on. Consider linking the education transition plan with the plan you are developing at home and make good use of the education system resources available to you.

### **Be an Active Participant**

Help to establish the transition team by suggesting individuals you know will be creative and reflect a positive attitude throughout the planning process. Find out who will be involved from the school – both school personnel and those from the community. Do not hesitate to make suggestions as you see fit. Ask about including a parent from another family in the neighbourhood that has recently gone through transition planning. Find out if your child could be provided with a peer mentor, an older student about to leave the school system that has been through the process.

Be prepared to share lots of information about your child. Share any exercises you have already completed such as the vision setting activity. In addition to advocating for your child and presenting your views of them, it is also important to listen to what others have to say and value their input. They may bring a different but fresh perspective of your child that you may not see.

Be prepared to participate in meetings by bringing creative ideas and information to the table and encouraging the same of others. Help to establish realistic goals and expectations for your child. Then make sure activities are identified that help move towards achieving your child's goals both at home and at school.

Identify and seek out opportunities and experiences for your child during their school years that will help them achieve their goals for the future, for example, co-op experience, work experiences, or volunteer opportunities. These activities provide them with much needed work experiences but are also great networking opportunities that will help your child become connected to the community outside of school.

### **Stay in Touch**

The IEP and transition plan will require lots of monitoring and review on a regular basis. Find out how this will be done and how your child's progress will be measured throughout the year. Make sure that reviews focus on ensuring the directions are still consistent with your child's interests and strengths and that identified activities are being completed as previously assigned. Regular reviews are important to ensure that your plan is on track and still consistent with a direction that you and your child are comfortable with pursuing.



Keep the lines of communication open with your child's teacher. Don't feel you have to wait for the next meeting of the transition team to discuss your child's progress. Recommend changes in goals, strategies and/or resources or support where you see a need.

This is your process. You will likely have to take an active role throughout your child's school career to ensure the process is moving your child towards the achievement of their goals. Making good use of the resources that are available through the school system will help to create a plan that will provide your child with many positive experiences to assist them make the transition to adult life.

## 5. TRANSITION IN THE COMMUNITY

This section outlines transition planning in the community system through a discussion of the following:

- Adult system reality – this is not an entitlement system and you need to be prepared;
- Access in Toronto – a description of accessing adult services in the Toronto Region; and
- Access in York Region – a description of accessing adult services in the York Region.

The service system is complex, there are many people accessing the services available and many waiting for supports. The transition to adult life may be a confusing time. Your child will likely have to leave behind some of the supports, if not all, they have become familiar with as an adolescent. You may need to develop a whole new set of activities, supports and services that are consistent with your child's preferences and interests as they begin their life as an adult. There may be some services that will continue to the age of 18 and even beyond (e.g. Special Services at Home) and some that will not continue (i.e. Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities). There are different supports and services available to a person over the age of 18 - such as the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

You need to become knowledgeable about services for adults and how your child will fit into it. This is a time for asking questions. Be sure you know what is going to happen to services and supports your family is currently receiving and what new services you may be eligible for as your child becomes an adult. Use this information as you begin your transition planning process.



As you make your plans for the future it is important to remember your child is entitled to service through the publicly funded education system. Adult services are not based on a system of entitlement. Both the increased demand for service and government policies have required agencies to look at serving those persons in their community

who are “most in need”. Practically this means that while your son or daughter might be eligible for service in the adult system, they may be on a waiting list for some time. Being prepared is key to a successful transition, but it is not a guarantee of receiving the supports and services that you might expect from the system.

Accessing services in the adult system is slightly different for each of Toronto and York Region. It is important to note that in both communities, if you are thinking of requesting a day or residential program you really only need to make one phone call as the agencies operate in a coordinated way for these services.

The following information identifies the process for each area.

### **Access in Toronto**

There are currently more than 30 agencies in Toronto serving people with a developmental disability that have organized themselves in an effort to make access to the adult service system easier for families. A family may call any one of the agencies who participate in the coordinated access and each agency will have the capacity to do the following:

- **Provide information about services and the system.** Regardless of which agency is called, the family should be able to receive information on what types of services and support are available throughout the community.
- **Determine eligibility for service.** The telephone conversation will confirm whether the person seeking service is eligible. If not, they will be redirected.
- **Document the initial referral information including the types of service and supports that are being requested.** The information regarding the family member seeking service will only need to be provided once even if the family or individual is looking for more services than those provided by the agency initially called.
- **Provide some short-term support.** If the family would like short-term help in considering services or other types of support options this will be provided most often through a series of meetings. The family can decide on the focus of this short term

help. Short term support does not change a family's request for service. Some examples may include:

- assisting the family in understanding how the service system works and what other services and supports may be helpful to them; and
  - assisting the family in person-centred planning to clarify the interests and desires of the person with the disability and their family members. The outcome of this may lead to some innovative or alternative plans that perhaps the family hadn't been able to imagine previously.
- **Make the link to a lead agency.** The family will be asked to identify a lead agency that will be responsible for managing the family's referral to the service system. The choice of lead agency is up to the family. Families may want to consider an agency that offers the type of service they are looking for; it may also be an agency that they have some familiarity or comfort with based on personal or cultural preferences; it may be an agency that offers some other informal supports that they would like to receive such as a newsletter or participation in parent groups.

Once this initial contact is complete the lead agency is responsible for maintaining the accuracy of the referral or service request information and for bringing a family's name forward when there is a vacancy in a program somewhere in the system. A person will be selected for that vacancy based on the most appropriate match of person to the service, and level of urgency in the family situation.

For example,

A family may originally call Community Living Toronto (CLT), complete the initial information and referral process for residential services and decide to stay with CLT as the lead agency. Then an opening becomes available at Reena. Based on the factors of best match and urgency of need, the family is offered the placement at Reena. The family can take the Reena opening or decline the service and continue to wait for one that may (or may not) come available at some point in the future at Community Living Toronto.

The family is responsible for keeping in touch with the lead agency. The family needs to let the lead agency know if there are any changes in circumstances that may have an impact on the referral for service – whether increasing or decreasing the need.

The following agencies participate in the Toronto access process. More information on access and these agencies can be found at [www.dsto.com](http://www.dsto.com)

Addus	Montage Support Services
Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf	MukiBaum Treatment Centres
Christian Horizons	New Leaf: Living and Learning Together
Common Ground Cooperative	New Visions Toronto
Community Living Toronto	Operation Springboard
CORE (Centre for Opportunities, Respect and Empowerment)	Participation House Toronto Parent Association
COTA Health	Pegasus Community Project for Adults with Special Needs
Family Service Association of Toronto	Reena
Geneva Centre for Autism	Safehaven Project for Community Living
Griffin Centre	
Harmony Place Support Services	Salvation Army. Broadview Village
JVS Toronto	Society of St Vincent de Paul
Kerry's Place Autism Services	Surex Community Services
L'Arche Toronto	Surrey Place Centre
Mary Centre of the Archdiocese of Toronto	VITA Community Living Services
Meta Centre	WoodGreen Community Services
	York Community Services

*tip #17*

Contact information for each of these agencies in Toronto is provided in Part 2: Tools & Resources under Service Resources.



## Access in York Region

The agencies in York Region are committed to a community planning process to work together to identify individuals who are most in need. All agencies are required to participate in the Community Response Committee in York Region to ensure that access to services occurs at the community level and not at a single agency level.

In York Region, access to adult developmental services is coordinated by York Support Services Network through the Service System Response Unit (SSRU). The function of the SSRU is to manage funded vacancies in an equitable way and provide the community and the Ministry with a snapshot of needs within York Region for future planning purposes.

Individuals and families wishing to access funded day program supports are required to make a referral to the Community Needs List (CNL). This referral can be made directly by the individual or family or through any of the developmental service agencies listed below:

Christian Horizons	Participation House
Community Living Newmarket and Aurora District	Reena
Community Living Georgina	Safehaven Project for Community Living
Independent Living Residences for the DeafBlind	Vita Community Living Services
Kerry's Place Autism Services	Community Living York South
L'Arche Daybreak	York Support Services Network
Mary Centre	Behaviour Management Services of York and Simcoe
Meta Centre	Children's Case Resolution
MukiBaum Association	Children's Case Coordination (MCSS/MCYS)
New Leaf: Living and Learning	Children's Treatment Network

### tip # 18

Contact information for each of these agencies in York Region is provided in Part 2: Tools & Resources under Service Resources.

Once the SSRU receives this referral, they will complete an intake interview to:

1. Ensure the individual is eligible for service;
2. To determine the type of need and prioritize the individual based on the information received on the CNL.;
3. Provide an overview of the service system; and
4. Provide immediate resources that may assist the family with their needs.

The SSRU can also assist the family or individual with resource information and assessment/prioritization for other supports offered by the developmental services sector including accommodation services, respite planning and resources, case management and case coordination.

When an agency in the community has a vacancy in a program they advise York Support Services Network. The vacancy in the program is offered to a person on the community needs list based on a match between the need of that person/family and the type of program that has the vacancy. This means that while a family may call a particular agency to establish a referral for service that request is not considered by that agency alone. It is reviewed along with all the other individuals requesting services in York Region. When service is offered to a family or individual it will be offered by the agency that has the appropriate vacancy at that time.

Once the referral has been made, it is up to the family or individual, to advise the Access Worker at York Support Services Network, of any changes in family circumstances (positive or negative) that may affect the referral. Some examples of such changes include:

- a family member has become ill and cannot care for the person with the disability; or
- the person with a disability has found a job and a day program is no longer needed.



## 6. TRANSITION PLANNING AT HOME

This section outlines things that you can do at home to help move the transition planning process along such as:

- Focus on the positive – an approach to presenting your child throughout the process that helps create a supportive and creative environment;
- Building self-reliance – the importance of fostering independence for your child and examples of how to do this;
- Get connected – the importance of finding people to support you and help you through the process; and
- Consider all options – the importance of being creative and trying new things.

There are many things that you can do at home to support the transition planning process without waiting for your child's teacher or someone in the community service system to start the process.

### **Focus on the Positive**

Keeping a positive attitude and setting expectations are very important factors in developing your transition plan. High expectations do not provide any guarantee of success, but setting expectations will help your child reach their potential. Always remember the way you view your child will have a direct impact on how they are viewed by others.

Everyone has strengths, gifts and abilities. Speak of your child's enabling qualities rather than the barriers that limit them. Too often, children with developmental disabilities have come to be described by their disabilities, which can be limiting in determining an appropriate action plan. When focussing on their abilities, strengths and interests, it is much easier to develop a positive and more creative plan.

## Build Self-Reliance

Building self-reliance is a key activity in developing a successful transition plan and in helping your child become a more independent adult. There are lots of ways you can begin developing your child's self-reliance skills at home from an early age simply through daily living activities. Use these opportunities to encourage your child to recognize and develop their abilities.

Building self-reliance is also about allowing your child to make decisions. Start early. Help your child become comfortable with the notion of making their own decisions. This will help them accept their role as decision-maker during transition planning activities.

Remember, making decisions will involve risks which subsequently have consequences. There may be a few hard lessons learned along the way but it is all part of growing-up and taking responsibility for actions as an adult. Continue to encourage your child and be sure to let them know that it is okay to make mistakes – everyone learns from their mistakes. Your child will come to recognize that they are capable of making decisions for themselves, which will help them as they move to life as an adult. Start small. Help your child to decide on things with low risk, such as what to wear, what to have for lunch, etc. Teach your child that they can ask for advice in making decisions – it is not something they need to do alone.

Below are examples of ways to encourage self-reliance. They progress from activities to do at an early age right through to the high school years. Recognize that not all activities listed may be appropriate for your child. Identify those that are consistent with your child's abilities and adapt suggestions where necessary. You may be surprised by what your child can accomplish if given the chance and lots of encouragement.



### **Examples of Ways to Encourage Self-Reliance**

- Teach your child everyday skills like brushing their teeth.
- Give your child household chores that match their abilities.
- Provide them with an allowance.
- Allow your child to choose how to spend some or all of their allowance.
- Teach your child their personal information such as address, phone number.
- Begin giving your child choices so they can learn to make decisions, like choosing which clothes to wear.
- Teach your child the consequences of their behaviours and their choices.
- Begin asking your child what they want to be when they grow up.
- Have your child help in making simple meals for the family and progress to having them make meals on their own.
- Involve your child in neighborhood and community activities, such as Scouts, swimming lessons, story hour at the library etc.
- Wherever possible and at an appropriate time, allow them to participate without you.
- Encourage hobbies based on your child's interests and strengths.
- Teach your child to speak up for themselves.
- Allow your child to complete homework assignments as independently as possible. Let them tell you when they need your assistance.
- Teach your child life skills, such as money management, shopping skills.
- Introduce your child to the public transit system.

- Encourage your child to get to places in the community on his/her own by using the public transit system, walking, making arrangements with friends.
- As part of the high school experience, consider community based job training (co-op programs) and life skills if these are appropriate activities for your child. Involve your child in all decision-making.
- Include your child in meetings about their education through the IEP process and transition planning.
- Continue to talk about career interests that are consistent with your child's interests and strengths.
- Help your child talk directly with doctors and other service providers.
- As appropriate, encourage gradual moves toward greater personal independence and self-care.
- Have your child do volunteer or paid work in the home, neighborhood or community. Assist your child in developing good work habits.
- Have your child become a mentor for younger children just entering high school.

The graphic for 'Tip #19' features the word 'tip' in a large, elegant cursive font, followed by '#19' in a smaller, simpler font. The background is a horizontal band with a soft, cloudy sky pattern.

Tool 4 in Part 2: Tools & Resources

highlights a complete checklist of transition activities that includes many self-reliance building activities that you can start from a very early age.

When thinking about self-reliance beyond the school years look at the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP), a resource that provides clear descriptions of the skills used in virtually all occupations, as well as important work habits. The OSP was developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The purpose of the

OSP is to document an individual's demonstration of skills and work habits that are considered to be of great importance in the workplace.

Students and job seekers can use the OSP to identify the skills they already have and to plan further skill development so that they can more easily make the transition to the workplace and/or to postsecondary education. The skills listed in the OSP are transferable skills that a student, job seeker and worker can take from job-to-job, sector-to-sector and school to work.

There are two components of the OSP that may be of interest in you and your child:

- the OSP database which lists skills and related tasks by occupation; and
- the OSP portfolio to keep work plans and other skill-related documents, such as a résumé and an OSP skills summary chart.



### *tip* # 20

You can access the Ontario Skills Passport website at:  
[www.skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/introduction.jsp?announcer=Home](http://www.skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/introduction.jsp?announcer=Home)

As you get into the activities for identifying what your child wants to do beyond school, this is a good resource to identify the skills your child may need in considering a potential occupation or post-secondary opportunity to pursue.

### **Get Connected**

This is the time to make sure you are informed about what is going on at the school and in the service system. Speak to your child's teacher. Make sure you understand the IEP and transition process as it is established in your child's school. Speak to your service providers. Understand what is going to happen to the services you are receiving now when they reach the age of 18 or 21. Find out about your community. Ask to be added to mailing lists of organizations you are interested in, sign up for newsletters, and read the community newspaper. It will be important for you to understand your community as you help your child make a connection to their community.

Transition planning is about being organized and prepared. If you haven't already started, it will be helpful to keep various records for your child together; for example, report cards, assessments, certificates of involvement in community programs etc. Put this guide into a binder and use it for keeping your transition planning resources and other important information in one place. You will likely need to refer to these documents as you discuss your plans for the future with various individuals. Keep track of who you talk to, times and dates of conversations, what was discussed, referrals to other individuals or organizations, and identify if a follow-up conversation is required.

The header for Tip # 21 features the words 'tip # 21' in a cursive font, set against a background of a cloudy sky.

Tool 3a in Part 2: Tools & Resources provides a template for keeping track of contact information as you begin talking with individuals and organizations.

Don't think you need to try to do this all on your own. Ask other people to get involved to help you and your child throughout this process. Start early and establish strong support networks – family, friends, parents, professionals, employers, trainers, community groups who can help build a connection to your community. Access agencies can provide you with information on parent groups in your community or ask at your child's school. If you find there are no parent groups in your area, consider starting one of your own.

Networking will be a key activity for you as you go through the transition process. This may involve making calls to people you have never spoken with before.

The header for Tip # 22 features the words 'tip # 22' in a cursive font, set against a background of a cloudy sky.

To make this a little less intimidating, use some of the tips in Tools 3b, c and d in Part 2: Tools & Resources to help you in your discussions with agencies, community organizations and professionals.



When talking with an access agency, there are many things they may be able to help you sort out but you need to ask. There may be a transition group already established in your area that you could be part of. The agency may be able to connect you to a parent's group or simply another parent that has already gone through this process – a mentor. Ask if there is a newsletter to parents that you could subscribe to. Find out if there is a coordinator available to help you navigate your way through the transition process. Be prepared to ask many of these questions for yourself and do not rely on the service system to provide this information to you.

### tip # 23

In Part 2: Tools & Resources under Supports to Parents further information is provided on parent groups in both Toronto and York Regions.

## Consider all Options

There are different options to consider in seeking out supports for your child that are found in the mainstream system available to others in the community. While your child is in the education system, take a look at the programs available to the general public through the Board of Education. While most courses are for adults there may be some programs that are available for younger people. Having your child participate in these programs can help to build their self-reliance skills and further develop their interests.

Get out in your community with your child and find a connection. From early on, participate with your child in recreation and leisure programs. Sign up for swimming lessons, craft programs, library groups. Seek out appropriate faith groups to participate in. These activities will provide you with a strong connection to the community and a good network of connections when you are looking for experiences for your child as an adolescent.

Find other parents and see what things they have done. Use their experience and knowledge of the system to help you make your way through. They will have a wealth of information that you can use to help determine your activities for your child. Ask your child's teacher what other parents have done for their children. They will likely have some good ideas based on what has worked for other parents in a similar situation.

Don't be afraid to try something new. During this time in your child's life, you need to give them many experiences to find out what they like and what they don't like. They need to find out what works for them. Trying new things will help them experience the world, will help them become familiar with their community and help them to be a part of it as they make the transition to adult life.

The creativity of parents...

One strategy is connecting to other parents who are seeking the same opportunities for their sons and daughters. Parents could consider pooling their resources and working together to develop a daytime schedule based on the unique needs and goals of their children. By doing this, parents are able to choose the hours that are best suited to their routine and select their own support staff.

Look in your community for an easy-to-access location such as a library or community centre for a meeting place. From there you can access a broad range of activities such as volunteer placements, fitness activities, literacy programs, and life skills.

## 7. NOW YOU ARE READY TO START

This section provides you with some practical tips on getting started now. Some of the suggestions include:

- Create your family vision – turn to Table 8 in the Tools & Resources section for further information;
- Create your vision for your child – a completed sample vision is highlighted in this section. You can also turn to Table 5 and Table 7a and 7b;
- Develop your plan – turn to Table 12; and
- Timeline of important activities – a list of suggested activities is outlined for you as your child progresses to adult life.

There is a lot of information in this guide. This section provides you with a short summary of the activities to consider now that you are ready to get started with your planning.

### Create Your Family Vision

Knowing where you and other members of your family want to be in the next five years or ten years is an important part of developing a vision and plan for your child. For most parents, the responsibilities of raising a child are close to being complete once their child reaches adulthood. Children take on more and more responsibilities for themselves. When raising a child with a developmental disability, parental responsibilities often continue on much longer, if not for life. You will need to consider how to manage these responsibilities within the context of how you see your life changing as you enter your retirement years.

For example, do you see your child continuing to live at home and for how long? At some point you will likely need to consider alternate living arrangements. It may not be right away but it is something that you need to consider as part of your plan.

#### *tip* # 24

Tool 8 in Part 2: Tools and Resources sets out a family profile that can be useful in creating your family vision.

You will need to ensure that your financial situation can manage the demands of supporting yourselves in retirement as well as any additional demands needed to support your child in the future. You may want to consider contacting a financial advisor to determine if you are receiving all the tax benefits you are entitled to as a parent of a child with a developmental disability and to ensure you are taking advantage of the appropriate investment tools that can help you meet your financial goals (e.g. Registered Education Savings Plans, Registered Retirement Savings Plans etc.)

### *tip # 25*

In Part 2: Tools & Resources under Financial Resources there is a list of tax benefits, credits and rebates as well as investment vehicles that may help you in making some financial decisions about the future.

## **Create Your Vision for Your Child**

As discussed in an earlier section, the vision for your child is an opportunity to highlight all of the gifts, strengths and abilities they have to offer. Being positive in establishing a vision can make a difference in how the planning for your child is approached and the way in which your child is perceived by others – define them by their abilities not their limitations.

### *tip # 26*

Below is a brief version of the tool you will find in Tool 5 in Part 2: Tools & Resources which will help develop your child's vision. Use this along with Tool 7 to help complete your child's profile.

My name is:	My age is:
<p>What I like to do and what I can do...</p> <p>At home:</p> <p>At school:</p> <p>At work (if working):</p> <p>In the community (outside of home, work or school)</p> <p>For fun (hobbies and interests):</p> <p>What I would like to do or learn to do...</p> <p>At home:</p> <p>At school:</p> <p>At work (if working):</p> <p>In the community (outside of home, work or school)</p> <p>For fun (hobbies and interests):</p> <p>When I grow up:</p> <p><b>Summary...</b></p> <p>My strengths/gifts are...</p> <p>My interests are...</p> <p>Some limitations that I need to talk about are...</p> <p>In my vision for the future, I would like to...</p>	

It is important to remember that all individuals have unique abilities that make them the person they are. Keep these in mind as you go through the steps of transition planning. The following example shows how you can create a vision for your child based on the positive attributes and unique abilities your child has to offer.

**ONE PERSON'S VISION...**

The following is an excerpt from one parent's description of their daughter's adult life reflecting the vision of inclusion they held for their daughter.

*“She has an extremely vigorous calendar of commitments. On Mondays she listens to Grade 1 students read at her old elementary school. This exercise helps the little ones gain confidence in their reading ability. Sue cannot speak and for the children this means they are able to read freely with no expectation of criticism, simply the reassurance of a smiling face. Sue is also a facilitator at the Royal Ontario Museum in the Bio-Diversity Hands-On exhibit, helping people discover things that they might otherwise not notice. My daughter also brings hope and inspires the vulnerable and dispossessed through her own vulnerability, when she volunteers at the Mustard Seed drop-in center with its community kitchen, library, sewing room, etc. Salt and Light TV is another place that Sue contributes her gifts. As well as helping with editing, her presence reminds this Catholic community who can sometimes get wrapped up in the hustle and bustle of film making, of the values that form the foundation of their faith. Most inspiring to many, is the fact that Sue is a dancer. She dances with the Spirit Movers liturgical dance group and testifies to her strong faith using this medium. How does a person who is non-verbal and wheelchair bound living within the constraints of others ideas and expectations of people with disabilities do all these things? Her success in overcoming obstacles is mainly due to the deep and committed relationships she has developed with family, friends, her support circle as well as collaboration with community groups that she comes in contact with regularly such as church, schools and other venues. Her support circle, who have been meeting regularly for the past 13 years, help interpret her goals and dreams. Sue does not speak, so those around her ensure that she has many other ways to express her feelings and desires. It is imperative that she have long-term relationships both paid and unpaid who can help build the capacity of the community to welcome her gifts. In return, Sue helps them create a better world for all. This is citizenship, and Sue is an esteemed educator in this regard.”*

## Get Your Plan Going

These next steps in the process will involve a lot of work on your part. Identify your transition team and select someone to be the coordinator. This is likely going to be an unpaid position, so if no one will take on this responsibility, it will be up to you to take it on yourself. Hold meetings, network, fill in the worksheets, network, update and monitor progress and network some more. The more connected and supported by creative people you are the better. Keep track of everyone you come in contact with over the years – networking is very important to developing your plan for the future.

A graphic box with a background of clouds. The text 'tip # 27' is written in a cursive font. Below the graphic, there is a text box containing the tip's content.

### tip # 27

Tool 12 in Part 2: Tools & Resources provides sample transition plans for you to review as you develop your own. One shows an example of a plan for a youth with high needs and the other is for a youth with moderate needs.

## Timeline of Important Activities

As you make your way through the transition planning process, there are many things to remember and some important timelines to keep in mind. As your child moves through their teenage years, you will need to clearly understand which services will change and which will remain the same and at what age these changes will take effect. You will also need to understand what you need to apply for and what is required for each application. For example, you will need to obtain a diagnosis of your child's disability for the Ontario Disability Support Program. You should apply for this benefit prior to your child's 18th birthday (at least six months prior) which means the formal diagnosis documentation is needed by the time they are 17.

The following is a list of activities and events that you should take note of as your child progresses towards adulthood. Again, activities should be undertaken that are consistent with your child's abilities and where such activities make sense for you as a family.

## **ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS TO CONSIDER TO PLAN FOR TRANSITION**

### **Age 0-2**

- Obtain a birth certificate and/or proof of citizenship.
- Begin financial planning. Set aside money to assist your child in the future.
- Apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit and the Universal Child Care Benefit.
- Apply for other federal benefits for children with disabilities, as appropriate based on eligibility requirements.
- Start a file for records like medical records, assessments, report cards, community certificates, records of completion.

### **Age 3-6**

- Talk with parents of children with and without disabilities. Begin developing a network of friends and supports early.
- Apply for Special Services at Home through the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

### **Age 7-11**

- Begin asking your child what they want to be when they grow up.
- Begin developing a vision for your child for life after high school.
- Begin developing a vision for your family for the future.
- Network with others who have recently experienced transition planning.

### **Age 12-16**

- Open a bank account for your child, if you haven't already done so.
- Include your child in meetings about their education through the IEP process and transition planning.



- Find a parent's group or transition planning group to join. If none are available, consider starting one.
- Consider carefully your child's options for high school education. Encourage community-based job training (co-op programs) and life skills if these are appropriate activities for your child. Involve your child in all decision-making.
- Continue to talk about career interests that are consistent with your child's interests and strengths.
- Look at the Ontario Skills Passport website for helpful information on developing employment skills at:  
<http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/login.jsp>
- Have your child do volunteer or paid work in the home, neighbourhood or community. Assist your child in developing good work habits.

### **Age 17-21**

- By age 17, obtain a diagnosis of disability in preparing for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) application. Surrey Place or your child's pediatrician can be helpful sources.
- Begin thinking about health care services that need to change as your child reaches adulthood, i.e., changing from pediatrician to family doctor.
- Contact the Office for Students with Disabilities on campus of a college or university your child is interested in attending.
- Contact ODSP for Income Support before age 18 (six months before turning 18).
- Contact ODSP Employment Supports for help with job search and training in their last term of school.
- Contact your local developmental services agency or Community Living Association for resources and training opportunities.
- Take on the role of coach on the sidelines and let your child become the decision maker.
- Apply for the Passport Initiative

## 8. SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

This section will leave you with the key messages communicated throughout the Guide in each of the previous sections.

You are going to have to work hard to help your child prepare for adult life. The system is not going to do this for you. The best transition plan is not going to guarantee that the supports and services you would like for your child will be available at the conclusion of your transition process. You will need to be creative and consider ways to support your child beyond the traditional service system.

These are some of the key messages that this guide will leave you with as you begin the transition planning process with your child.

- It is never too early to start planning - start thinking about your plan before your child is in high school. There are many things you can do from an early age to prepare for the changes ahead.
- From a very young age, you can begin building self-reliance skills to encourage a move to a more independent life as an adult.
- Your vision should be a long-term objective – one that is achieved in incremental steps by identifying activities to complete on a year-by-year basis. Most importantly, this vision should be done with the active involvement of your child.
- Establish a vision for your family. Your plans for the future need to be considered and factored into the development of the plan for your child.
- Be prepared to have to initiate things for yourself. Do not wait for the education system to create a plan for you. Do not wait for your service providers to create a plan for you. Do not assume that the service system will provide support when your child turns 21. It will be up to you to create your child's future.
- Calls to agencies and professionals that you may not have spoken to before could be intimidating at first but being organized and prepared before you call will make the task seem less daunting. Use the tools and the resources provided in this document to help you get started.

- Find creative people, energetic people, positive people that will surround you with the type of support you need as you enter this major time in your child's life. Speak to your child's teacher to find a parent in your area or speak to an access agency. They will connect you to other parents or parent groups. If you do not find an appropriate group, then consider starting your own.

**SOME FINAL THOUGHTS FROM EXPERIENCED PARENTS...**



*"Do your research and know what you are asking for."*

*"You can't rely on the system - government funding isn't secure and it won't ever replace the importance of valued relationships."*

*"You have got to start to think differently and figure out something for the future or you and your son or daughter are going to be sitting at home together all day watching TV."*

*"Get yourself connected to some parent groups through an agency – stay involved – in whatever way you can including volunteering your time – it's a great way to get connected with others. Get newsletters – it's a way of getting information."*

*"Everyone has the capacity to dream and to see their child as a person with gifts - you have to find the way to change your view point."*



## **PART 2: TOOLS & RESOURCES**

## **PART 2: TOOLS & RESOURCES**

### **1. TOOLS**

#### **Tool 1: Best Practices in Transition Planning**

Best practices are programs, initiatives or activities which are considered leading edge, or exceptional models for others to follow. Many research studies have been undertaken to identify the best practices in transition planning. A summary of that information is provided below.

#### **Person-Centred/Person Directed**

Involving the child with developmental disabilities in the planning process in ways consistent with their abilities is an important key to its success. When the person is engaged in the process and is making choices about their future, the likelihood of positive outcomes is enhanced. Having the young person take a leadership role is also a good opportunity for them to enhance their self-advocacy or self-determination skills. This is a much needed skill for making the transition to adult life.

The plan focuses on strengths and abilities rather than disabilities and identifies appropriate activities that are responsive to the child's needs for putting the plan in action. Typically, a person-centred plan should include the following steps:

- Share background information about the individual.
- Pulling together an energetic team to develop a comprehensive personal profile of the individual.
- Identifying a clear, unrestricted vision of success which guides the rest of the process. This vision involves the person's talents and dreams, and includes new roles he or she can fill in society.
- Developing the plan.

#### **Include Others**

It is important to include parents and/or other family members in transition planning. Evidence shows that this involvement increases the success of transition planning. Typically, the parents and family know the child

best and are most able to identify the child's strengths in putting together the transition plan. The child's best advocate is a parent who will likely have the greatest insight into what their child wants to accomplish. Parents can also share their child's dream and help them put it into action through a transition plan.

It is also important to involve other individuals in the development of the transition plan. While parents have invaluable insight to their child's strengths, abilities, aspirations, and dreams, they may not have a completely unbiased view of what their child is capable of accomplishing. Other individuals to consider in forming a transition team could include: friends, teachers, social workers, current and future community service providers, post-secondary representatives, employers and/or members of community business organizations, etc. These individuals can make invaluable contributions to the transition planning process by helping to build a network of supports and services that will be needed to make the transition to adult life.

### **Identify a Coordinator**

A coordinator for the transition planning process should be someone that the family is comfortable dealing with and could be any member of the transition planning team. This role could be assigned to a parent or other family member, or it may be a teacher or other school official if the plan is being coordinated through the school system.

Typically, the coordinator plays an important role in tying together the many transition activities that may be happening concurrently; for example, transition activities in the school system, coordination with the service system and activities at home and in the community. The coordinator would play a key administration role by scheduling meetings and recording minutes of meetings, tracking activities identified for action and following up on implementation of activities. The coordinator would also be responsible for writing up the transition plan and ensuring that review and updating occurs on a regular and timely basis.

## **Monitor and Update**

One of the most important concepts in developing a transition plan is the need to have the plan reflect the preferences and interests of the child. It is the responsibility of the transition team and more specifically the coordinator, to monitor, review and update the plan regularly to ensure that the interests of the child are central to the process.

These plan “check-ups” should be used to review and update progress on identified actions, record achievements, identify new tasks or actions to be taken, and review the goals to ensure they are still consistent with the child’s interests and preferences. The transition plan is a document that should be updated and reviewed even beyond the transition itself.

## **TOOL 2: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRANSITION PLANNING TEAM**

The following information provides suggestions for members of your transition planning team and responsibilities for each.

### **Youth**

- Attend IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Lead the transition planning meetings, with support as required.
- Share his or her personal preferences, interests, skills, goals, and needs with the team (with support, as needed).
- Ask questions and provide information to the team on various issues that he or she wants to address, such as wellness, medical, social, sexual, financial or guardianship issues (with support, as needed).
- Assume responsibility for working towards his or her goals and completing the tasks listed in the Transition Plan.

### **Parents or Guardians**

- Attend IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Prepare their son/daughter for participation in the process.
- Support their son/daughter's leadership role in the process.
- Lead transition planning meetings where possible and desired.
- Provide valuable insight into the background and values of their family.
- Share their son/daughter's and their own preferences, interests, skills, goals, and needs.
- Focus the team's planning on the youth's and family's needs and goals.
- Provide their son/daughter with opportunities to learn and practice the foundation skills, such as problem-solving skills, assertiveness, self-advocacy, and stress management skills that support active participation in the transition planning process.
- Provide information on the programs and support services that are accessed by and available to their son/daughter.



## **Transition Coordinator**

- Coordinate and schedule meetings.
- Manage the paper work and maintain a transition file that contains assessments, the IEP/Transition Plan and related materials.
- Keep the planning session focused.
- Resolve conflicts.
- Monitor the progress of the IEP/Transition Plan.
- Obtain commitment for follow-up action and ensure that all participants are clear on the specific tasks/actions they are to undertake.
- Coordinate the writing and implementation of the IEP/Transition Plan.

## **Special Educators**

- Attend IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Listen to the youth's vision and identify his or her needs.
- Ensure that referrals are made to the appropriate community service agencies.
- Ensure that the youth's and family's needs and goals are articulated, understood and used to drive transition planning.

## **General Educators**

- Attend IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Consult with the planning team on education opportunities, graduation requirements and assessments, and on the youth's progress and support needs.
- Help identify and analyze post-secondary education opportunities.
- Provide instruction to the youth on the knowledge and skills required to support a successful transition to adulthood.
- Support an inclusive environment for the youth with developmental disabilities.

### **Vocational Specialists**

- Attend IEP/transition planning meetings for students who require vocational training or placement.
- Help identify and analyze relevant pre-employment and vocational training programs.

### **Social Workers, Service Providers and Other Community Members**

- Attend and contribute to IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Provide support services in community settings.
- Provide the youth with cultural support and connection where possible.

### **Other Family Members, Friends and Advocates**

- Attend IEP/planning meetings as appropriate.
- Share information on the youth's and family's preferences, interests, goals and needs.
- Assist and support the youth and his or her family as they discuss their needs and goals.
- Focus the team's planning on the youth's and family's needs and goals.
- Provide informal home and community experiences and supports, if possible.

## **TOOL 3: TIPS FOR DEALING WITH AGENCIES AND PROFESSIONALS**

### **Tool 3a: Contact Information**

Use this table to help keep track of information from your conversations with individuals along the way.

Name of Organization:	
Date Contacted:	
Name & Position of Person You Spoke with:	
Purpose of the Contact:	
Type of Organization & Services Offered:	
Address:	
Phone Number/ Fax Number:	
Website Address:	
Child's name left for referral of service for this agency:	
Information for contacting another individual or organization:	
Follow-up conversation requested and proposed date of follow-up:	
Comments or other important information:	

### **Tool 3b: Tips When Meeting with Agencies or Professionals**

- Make an appointment to discuss issues. Don't try to have a "conference" with the teacher, for instance, while picking up your child.
- Before the meeting, jot down what you want to accomplish, what questions you have, what you want for your child.
- If you feel apprehensive or uncertain about a meeting, take a friend or peer advocate along with you.
- When you talk with a professional take notes. It is easy to forget important information. Or take someone with you who will take notes for you.
- Expect, and ask for, written reports of important information, such as a summary of decisions made at a meeting, progress of your child, etc. Keep all reports and information in a file (notebook) for future reference.
- Be prepared to give concrete, useful information about your child rather than vague generalities. Describe what your child can or can not do. It helps to jot down things you think are important. It's easy to forget, so get in the habit of keeping records.
- Be assertive, rather than passive or aggressive. Express your needs clearly and directly; state what you believe your child needs, stick to the facts, avoid accusations and finger-pointing. Use expressions like, "I feel," "I believe," rather than "you always" or "if only you would."
- If you do not understand what is being said or do not understand some of the terms being used, ASK to have them clearly explained. Keep asking until you understand.
- When a problem arises, concentrate on a problem-solving approach. Avoid blaming and excuse making. Approach the problem, not the personality of the person. Don't accept excuses, but try to get a plan developed which will solve the problem.

### **Tool 3c: Telephone Tips**

- Always have a pen and paper with you before calling an agency. It is a good idea to keep information in one place such as a notebook.
- State who you are and where you live.
- State the reason you are calling:
  - I'm calling for information about ...
  - I would like to make an appointment for ...
  - I was told to call your office by (give the person's name) from (agency).
  - I am returning (name)'s call for (reason)...
- Ask if there is a specific person within that agency that you should speak to. Write down that person's name and phone number so that you may contact them directly. This way you will be sure you are talking to the right person and, hopefully, you will not have to repeat your whole story! Then contact them directly.
- Be prepared to describe what you or your child needs and what services you think the agency can provide. Ask if the agency has pamphlets or booklets that describe the services of the agency. Any written information is useful. The person helping you may need income or insurance information, names of pediatricians, health clinics, or case managers, social insurance numbers, etc. Have this information (your notebook) in front of you.
- Take brief notes of your conversation so that you may ask questions. Be assertive and polite. If you do not understand what is being said, repeat what you do understand and ask the person to clear up any misunderstandings, or if needed, ask the agency for employees who are bi-lingual /cultural and ask to speak with them.
- Follow-up
  - Find out if and when you need to call back.
  - Let staff know times that are best for them to reach you.
  - Write down any appointments or office visits that you need to make.
  - Double check the address and business hours of the agency.
  - Find out what papers, documents or other information you will need before you contact the agency again.
  - If the agency is sending information to you, ask when you should expect to receive it.

### Tool 3d: Telephone Interview Guides

When you are starting your cold calling and search for service providers, start with access agencies that can refer you to other organizations.

#### Sample Telephone Script for a parent's conversation with an access agency:

*"Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a parent of a youth who is \_\_\_\_\_ (for example, exploring career options, or interested in a program). I am looking for information to help in planning for my (son's or daughter's) future.*

*I found your organization through \_\_\_\_\_ (for example, another agency, another parent, a publication) and I am interested in learning more about what services you provide (or what your organization does). Please tell me about your agency/organization.*

*Could you tell me who in your organization I should talk to for more information?*

*Do you have a website or any written materials describing your agency (or organization) that you could direct me to?*

*If you have written materials, could you please send them to me \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) at \_\_\_\_\_ (your address).*

*Who do you serve?*

*What services do you offer?*

*How does one get involved with your agency/organization?*

*Are there special eligibility or admission requirements?*

*How does one apply?*

*Are there costs involved in participating in your agency's or organization's programs?*

*If so, how much are they?*

*My child is \_\_\_\_\_(their age) but I am trying to get organized early for their transition to the adult life. Do you offer any short term supports to help us understand the system better or help us begin our transition planning process?*

*Is there a case coordinator that could be assigned to us to help?*

*Do you know of any transition planning agencies that could provide us with this support?*

*Do you have any ideas about how your agency or organization might help meet a need such as: (Describe a “specific problem or need” that you might have, for example: youth has a developmental disability and needs assistance changing buses; teen parent with a learning disability needs child care so that she can go to work after school; and so forth.)*

*Could you refer me to some other people, agencies, or organizations that might offer some services to meet this need?*

*Do you have a newsletter for parents?*

*Are there parent groups at this agency or another agency that I can join?*

*Can you put me in touch with another family that has recently gone through transition planning that could share their experiences with me (a mentorship)?*

*Thank you for speaking with me today. This information is very helpful in planning my (son's or daughter's) future as a member of our community.*

**Sample Telephone Script for a parent’s conversation about community programming (for example - through Parks and Recreation):**

*“Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a parent of a youth who is interested in a recreational program.*

*My child is \_\_\_\_\_(their age) and I am trying to find programs to help connect them to the community.*

*Do you have any ideas about how your organization might help meet a need such as: (Describe a “specific problem or need” that you might have, for example: youth has a developmental disability and needs to learn how to swim or needs to make a connection to their community).*

*Could you tell me who in your organization I should talk to about this?*

*Please tell me about your available programs.*

*Do you have a website or any written materials with course descriptions that you could direct me to?*

*If you have written materials, could you please send them to me \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) at \_\_\_\_\_ (your address).*

*Are there special eligibility or admission requirements?*

*How does one apply?*

*What are the costs involved in participating in your organization’s programs?*

*If so, how much are they?*

*Do you have flexible rates?*

*If personal support is required to participate, do you provide it?*

*Could you refer me to some other people, agencies, or organizations that might offer some services to meet this need?*

*Thank you for speaking with me today. This information is very helpful in enabling my (son or daughter) to participate as a member of the community.*



## TOOL 4: TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES

Section 7 contained a timeline chart listing the activities that were specific to parents. This chart provides a more comprehensive listing of activities for both parents and children.

### Age 0-2

- ✓ Encourage language and communication. Assist your child in learning some means of communication – the more vocabulary that is understood and expressed the better.
- ✓ Obtain a birth certificate and/or proof of citizenship.
- ✓ Begin financial planning. Set aside money to assist your child when he or she makes the transition to adult living.
- ✓ Apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit and the Universal Child Care Benefit.
- ✓ Apply for other federal benefits for children with disabilities, as appropriate based on eligibility requirements.
- ✓ Start a file for records. Start keeping track of records related to your child and add to the file as they progress through the various stages of their lives – things like medical records, assessments, report cards, community certificates, records of completion, etc.

### Age 3-6

- ✓ Involve your child in social activities. Enroll them in preschool, religious education, co-operative play groups, and/or day care so that the child gets experience socializing with others – those with and without disabilities.
- ✓ Have your child participate in leisure activities so they can begin to understand their likes and dislikes.
- ✓ Invite families with children your child's age to your home to play.
- ✓ Teach your child everyday skills like brushing their teeth.

- ✓ Teach your child about their disability. Teach them self care skills related to their special needs.
- ✓ Make sure your child has an effective communication system (words, pictures, gestures or sign language).
- ✓ Give your child household chores that match their abilities.
- ✓ Begin giving your child choices so they can learn to make decisions. Teach your child the consequences of their behaviours and their choices.
- ✓ Seek inclusion. Consider very carefully what type of schooling your child will receive. Make sure that he or she is included as much as possible in the typical school program. Regular kindergarten in your neighborhood school should be the first option to explore.
- ✓ Talk with parents of children with and without disabilities. Begin developing a network of friends and supports early.
- ✓ Apply for Special Services at Home through the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

### **Age 7-11**

- ✓ Assign your child regular chores as part of the family's activities. Provide them with an allowance.
- ✓ Allow your child to choose how to spend some or all of their allowance.
- ✓ Let your child make mistakes.
- ✓ Teach your child to speak up for themselves.
- ✓ Involve your child in neighborhood and community activities, such as scouts, swimming lessons, story hour at the library etc. Wherever possible, allow them to participate without you.
- ✓ Encourage hobbies based on your child's interests and strengths.

- ✓ Teach your child life skills, such as money management, shopping skills. Make your child responsible for good grooming and allow them to choose which clothes to wear. Teach your child to make simple meals.
- ✓ Allow your child to complete homework assignments as independently as possible. Let them tell you when they need your assistance.
- ✓ Explore communication systems that support language and literacy
- ✓ Teach your child their personal information such as address, phone number, etc.
- ✓ Introduce your child to the public transit system.
- ✓ Begin sex education. As your child grows and matures, help him or her to understand human reproduction and sexual development as a normal part of growing up.
- ✓ Begin asking your child what they want to be when they grow up.  
Develop a vision for your child for life after high school.
- ✓ Help your child talk directly with doctors and other service providers.
- ✓ Network with others who have recently experienced transition planning.

### **Age 12-16**

- ✓ Have your child advocate for themselves.
- ✓ Encourage your child to join teams and clubs at school.
- ✓ Have your child continue their involvement in activities outside of school as well.
- ✓ Encourage your child to hang out with friends.
- ✓ As appropriate, encourage gradual moves toward greater personal independence and self-care.
- ✓ Discuss sexuality with your teen.
- ✓ Allow your child to help in the preparation and cooking of meals.

- ✓ Open a bank account for your child, if you haven't already done so.
- ✓ Encourage your child to get to places in the community on his/her own by using the public transit system, walking, making arrangements with friends.
- ✓ Include your child in meetings about their education through the IEP process and transition planning.
- ✓ Continue to talk about career interests that are consistent with your child's interests and strengths.
- ✓ Consider carefully your child's options for high school education. Encourage community based job training and life skills if these are appropriate activities for your child. Involve your child in all decision-making.
- ✓ Take a look at the Ontario Skills Passport website for helpful information on developing employment skills at:  
<http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/login.jsp>
- ✓ Have your child do volunteer or paid work in the home, neighborhood or community. Assist your child in developing good work habits.
- ✓ Look into the Assistive Devices Program for support with communication technology

### **Age 17-21**

- ✓ By age 17, obtain a diagnosis of disability in preparing for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) application. Surrey Place or your child's pediatrician can be helpful sources.
- ✓ Encourage your child to find a job in the community or to pursue post-secondary education or training.
- ✓ Have your child become a mentor for younger children just entering high school.
- ✓ Find out about community programs for adults that match your child's leisure or athletic interests.
- ✓ Apply for the Passport Initiative

- ✓ Support your child in establishing an appropriate living arrangement such as attendant services and supported living options.
- ✓ Have your child prepare meals for the family.
- ✓ Encourage your child to practice budgeting and banking skills.
- ✓ Contact the Office for Students with Disabilities on campus of a college or university your child is interested in pursuing.
- ✓ Contact Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) for Income Support before age 18.
- ✓ Contact ODSP Employment Supports for help with job search and training.
- ✓ Contact your local service agency for resources and training opportunities.
- ✓ Take on the role of coach on the sidelines and let your child become the decision maker.

## TOOL 5: CREATING MY VISION

Use this form to develop a vision for your child. To the extent possible, have your child answer the questions themselves or have another family member or friend help them with their answers. You should review this periodically as your child's preferences, interests, likes, dislikes and abilities are bound to change from one year to the next.

My name is:		My age is:	
<b>What I like to do and what I can do...</b>			
At home:			
At school:			
In the community (e.g. at work or volunteering)			
For fun (hobbies and interests):			
<b>What I would like to do or learn to do...</b>			
At home:			
At school:			
In the community (e.g. at work or volunteering)			

For fun (hobbies and interests):	
When I grow up:	
<b>What I don't like to do...</b>	
At home, school or in the community	
<b>Summary...</b>	
My strengths/gifts are...	
My interests are...	
Some things I need support with are...	
The kind of support that works for me is....	
In my vision for the future, I would like to...	

## TOOL 6: YOUR TRANSITION TEAM

This form provides examples of the types of individuals you may want to include on your transition team. By no means do you need to include someone from each category. Once you have picked your team, revise the form so it reflects your transition team.

<b>TEAM MEMBERS NAMES</b>	<b>E-MAIL ADDRESS PHONE NUMBER</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
ME	Email:	
	Tel:	
TRANSITION COORDINATOR	Email:	
	Tel:	
FAMILY MEMBER(s)	Email:	
	Tel:	
FRIEND(s)	Email:	
	Tel:	
COMMUNITY MEMBER(s)	Email:	
	Tel:	
SCHOOL PERSONNEL	Email:	
	Tel:	
SOCIAL WORKER(s)	Email:	
	Tel:	
SERVICE PROVIDER(s)	Email:	
	Tel:	



## TOOL 7: YOUR CHILD’S PROFILE

These two tables can be used to help build your child’s profile

### Characteristics and Qualities

To the extent possible, have your child complete Tools 7a and 7b. The questions are written as if speaking to your child. List as many points as you can think of in the boxes on the right. Your child can complete this profile alone if possible, but it is helpful to also ask a family member or other important person these questions to find out how they see things. The information from the vision exercise may be helpful to use here as well.

QUESTIONS	YOUR ANSWERS
What are your strengths?	
What are your interests?	
What do you like?	
What do you dislike?	
How do you communicate with people? (Example: quiet, talkative, use a communication device?)	
What are your accomplishments?	
Do you have any special considerations? (Include anything not covered by the above)	
What are some words that describe you? (Example: outgoing, positive, picky, good reader, shy, funny, patient, etc.)	

## Services and Supports

On this table, list the supports you use now and those that you will need in the future.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
What services and/or supports do you currently use?	
What additional services and supports do you need now?	
What services and supports do you anticipate needing when you leave high school?	

## TOOL 8: YOUR FAMILY PROFILE

You may choose to use this worksheet to identify the services and supports you will need as your child transitions to adulthood.

QUESTIONS	SERVICES AND SUPPORTS
What services and/or supports does your son or daughter currently use?	
What additional services and supports does your family need now?	
What services and supports does your family anticipate needing when our son or daughter leaves high school?	
What activities can you provide that will help your son/daughter prepare for adult life?	
What financial resources do you have and what will be required to help support your child when they leave high school?	
Additional considerations	

## TOOL 9: SETTING YOUR GOALS

To help you set your goals, 11 goal categories are listed in the following table. Beside the categories that are important to you, write down your short-term goals (six months to one year) and your long-term goals (one to five years). It may be helpful to work with your parent(s) or guardian(s) in setting your goals as they may have suggestions and insights.

GOAL CATEGORY	MY SHORT-TERM GOALS (over 6 months to 1 year)	MY LONG-TERM GOALS (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Health/Fitness</b> (Example: I will take my medication at the right time, without anyone reminding me to do so.)		
<b>Daily Living</b> (Example: I will be able to plan and prepare all of my meals.)		
<b>Housing/Living Arrangements</b> (Example: I will live in my own apartment.)		
<b>Finances/Money</b> (Example: I will deposit my allowance and any other money I earn into a bank account using an ATM bank machine.)		

GOAL CATEGORY	MY SHORT-TERM GOALS (over 6 months to 1 year)	MY LONG-TERM GOALS (over 1 to 5 years)
<p><b>Friendships/Social Life</b> (Example: I will get together with my friends to have fun once a week.)</p>		
<p><b>Support Circles</b> (Example: I will join or establish a circle of support to surround myself with help and friendship.)</p>		
<p><b>Transportation</b> (Example: I will take a public bus to school.)</p>		
<p><b>Post-Secondary Education/Training</b> (Example: I will go to college to become a _____.)</p>		
<p><b>Employment</b> (Example: I will have a job working as a _____.)</p>		
<p><b>Recreation</b> (Example: I will participate in an art class.)</p>		
<p><b>Community Involvement</b> (Example: I will volunteer at the SPCA.)</p>		
<p><b>Legal/Advocacy</b> (Example: I will learn how to speak up for myself.)</p>		

## TOOL 10: TRANSITION PLAN TEMPLATE

Use this form to bring the information from the previous exercises together to establish your transition plan.

Name:		
Date:		
Birth Date:		
School:		
Profile:		
Strengths:		
Student's Vision:		
<b>Goal #1</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Post-Secondary Education / Training</b>		
<b>Skills and Abilities related to Post-Secondary Education/Training Goals:</b>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1.		
2.		
3.		

<b>Goal #2</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Employment/Volunteer</b>		
<b>Skills and Abilities Related to Post-Secondary Education / Training Goals:</b>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1.		
2.		
3.		

<b>Goal #3</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Living in the Community</b>		
<b>Skills and Abilities Related to Living in the Community:</b>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1.		
2.		
3.		

<b>Goal #4</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Recreational/Social Activities</b>		
<b>Skills and Abilities Related to Living in the Community:</b>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1.		
2.		
3.		

<b>Goal #5</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Other</b>		
<b>Skills and Abilities Related to Living in the Community:</b>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1.		
2.		
3.		



## TOOL 11: AN ACTION PLAN

Use this form to summarize the actions identified in transition planning meetings. This list can then be used at the next meeting to make sure your activities are moving along as planned and you are accomplishing the tasks you need to as you move forward. Make copies of this chart to fill out, for each of your goals.

**Date and place of today's meeting:**

**Goal # \_\_\_\_ :**

What needs to be done to achieve this?	Who is responsible for achieving this?	When will this be achieved?	How will we know when we have succeeded?	Status (not started, in progress, or complete)
1.				
2.				
3.				

When and where will the next meeting take place?

## TOOL 12: SAMPLE TRANSITION PLANS

### For a Youth with High Needs

Name: Donna    Date:                      Birth Date:                      School:

#### **Profile:**

Donna is a very petite young woman, the oldest in her family, with three younger brothers. Healthy and responsive to her environment, Donna was diagnosed at birth with microcephaly, epilepsy, and very high muscle tone. She is dependent on others for all aspects of daily living. Donna has custom seating in a manual wheelchair to accommodate and discourage further scoliosis. Donna has a wealth of family, friends and acquaintances who contribute to her feeling of being valued and loved. Her support network meets to review, dream and continue to develop a shared vision with Donna, offering ideas from their varied perspectives. The members include her parents, brothers, aunts and uncle, neighbours and former SSAH support workers, her own and family friends. Some current support personnel are also invited to participate in ensuring the richness of Donna's life in the community.

#### **Strengths:**

**Life Skills:** Donna is easy going and co-operative. She enjoys almost all foods offered to her, and can reach for objects, manipulating them between her hands,

**Health /Physical Management:** Donna is healthy and strong and is developing improved seizure control. She co-operates with someone assisting her with transfers, and dressing.

**Social Connections:** Donna enjoys peer interaction, has a circle of acquaintances, in many familiar settings, which continues to grow.

**Emotional Well-being:** Donna is patient and trusting, undemanding yet determined, and affectionate, Donna has a sense of humour, is adaptable and resilient. She knows she is loved.

**Psychological Aptitude:** Donna recognizes voices, situations and faces. She recognizes patterns of events, and understands cause and effect.

**Communication Ability:** Donna is a good listener, and is responsive to conversation, She expresses her likes/dislikes, uses instruments to convey a message, recognizes own name, certain words and short phrases

**Leisure Identity:** Donna enjoys being out-of-doors in all seasons, and loves to ride in vehicles. She goes skating in her wheelchair, and swimming where she also uses the whirlpool.

**Shared Vision:** Donna will be acknowledged as an adult capable of and deserving an interesting and valued life.

Donna will receive individualized funding to support her life

She will be supported to expand her network of relationships, and to nurture those relationships.

Donna will be encouraged to continue developing her communications skills through sound and gesture. Her communications will be respected.

She will maintain her health and flexibility.

Donna will receive her own invitations from family and friends to attend or be a guest.

She will participate in a range of activities of interest and benefit to herself and others, which include recreation, sensory stimulation, therapy and community service.

<b>Goal #1</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Learning/ Opportunities</b>	Seek out continuing education opportunities	
<b>Skills and Abilities Related to Post-Secondary Education / Training Goals:</b> Donna is non-judgemental, patient and trusting, undemanding yet determined, funny, adaptable and resilient.		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1. Explore with college personnel the possibility for auditing a course	Family	Early Fall
2. Explore Board of Education general interest night courses	1:1 support staff	Early Fall

<b>Goal #2</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Relationships</b> Recreational and Social Activities	Donna will nurture acquaintances, and make new friends.	Donna will expand her network of relationships
<p><b>Skills and Abilities Related to Relationships:</b> Donna is non-judgemental, patient and trusting, undemanding yet determined, funny, adaptable and resilient.</p>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1. Invitations to visit Donna and socialize in her home	Family member or friend to host; 1:1 support staff offer hospitality	Network meeting
2. Celebrate occasions and seasons	Family and support staff	ongoing
3. Gather her support network together	Family	
4. Encourage the interest of people Donna meets and exchange names/contact info	Everyone	ongoing
5. Keep an up-to-date address book	Family/support workers	Network meeting

<b>Goal #3</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Life in the Community - Volunteer Roles Recreation/Social Life</b>	Donna will discover welcoming places, and be able to establish a community presence	Donna will have the support to be a citizen- participating and contributing
<p><b>Skills and Abilities Related to Life in the Community:</b> Donna is responsive to conversation She is a good listener, expresses her likes/dislikes, recognizes voices, situations and faces She recognizes patterns of events.</p>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1. Attend community events	Family/1:1 support staff	ongoing
2. Explore local community recreation and neighbourhood consumer opportunities	Everyone	summer
3. Be an active member of her church community/ continue to volunteer Out of Cold program	Family on weekends/ support staff on Tuesdays in winter	October
4. Make dates for movies, concerts - invite a guest	Staff support and family	Network meeting
5. Seek out new volunteer opportunities	1:1 support staff and family with help from Volunteer Centre Toronto	September
6. Explore out of home sleepover opportunities.	Family/supporters	

<b>Goal #4</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Physical Fitness</b>	Increased flexibility/ decreased muscle tone	Continue to be healthy and strong
<p><b>Skills and Abilities Related to Physical Fitness:</b> Donna is healthy and strong. She loves a variety of positions, and the physical intimacy that is required to support her.</p>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1. Spend time in activities which offer chances for stretching, movement, and weight bearing (outdoors and indoors)	Support staff and family	ongoing
2. Weekly swim at local community centre whirlpool	1-1 support staff	ongoing

<b>Goal #5</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Communication</b>	Help others to understand and communicate effectively with Donna	same
<p><b>Skills and Abilities Related to Communication:</b> Donna is a good listener, expresses her likes/dislikes, uses instruments to convey a message, recognizes own name, certain words, short phrases and perhaps more.</p>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1. Model posture, tone of voice, patience and expectation of a response when communicating with Donna.	Everyone	ongoing

<b>Goal #6</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Health</b>	Pursue optimal seizure control	Donna will not require medication for seizures
<p><b>Skills and Abilities Related to Health:</b> Donna is developing improved seizure control.</p>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1. Work towards minimum or no amount of medication	Family and support staff in co-operation with medical team	Every 6 months

## For a Youth with Moderate Needs

Name: Steve      Date: October 2006      Birth Date:      School:

### **Profile:**

Steve is a student with a moderate developmental disability who is seeking supported employment and an independent community living opportunity at an appropriate time after high school. The student's teacher-adviser is serving as the leader of the transition planning team. A representative from the local Association for Community Living has agreed to participate on the student's transition planning team.

### **Strengths:**

Steve enjoys math and is good at counting and sorting. He has a good understanding of the concept of money and can identify the value of all coins and paper currency. Steve enjoys geography and using maps. He can locate each of the provinces on a map of Canada. Steve is active and enjoys participating in outdoor activities. Steve is particularly interested in gardening. Steve also enjoys listening to music and has a strong circle of friends. Steve is an easy going individual and makes friends easily.

### **Student's Vision:**

Steve would like a supported employment position somewhere close to home. If possible, he would like to work at a gardening centre. He would like to continue living at home in the immediate future and then possibly living with another young adult with special needs in a supported placement at an appropriate time.



<b>Goal #1</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Employment</b>	Steve will work in part-time jobs until the end of high school.	Steve will find a full-time job with support.
<p><b>Skills and Abilities Related to Employment Goals:</b></p> <p>Steve enjoys working and has had some good placement opportunities in the co-operative education program. One of his placements was at the local grocery store stocking shelves. He has a good understanding of the concept of money. Steve gets along well with other people both socially and in a work environment. He loves gardening and would like to work in a gardening centre when he finishes high school.</p>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1. Expand work Semester experience through continued participation in co-operative education program.	Steve, educational assistant, monitoring of co-operative education teacher and input of special education teacher	Semester II 2006-07
2. Do additional work placements of increasing duration (if available)	Co-operative education teacher and special education teacher	Semester II 2007-08
3. Investigate summer work placement programs	Parents, community living representative	Spring 2008

<b>Goal #2</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Independent Living</b>	Steve will continue to live at home with his family until the transition to supported employment is well established.	Steve will live with a roommate in an appropriate community living housing arrangement with supports.
<b>Skills and Abilities Related to Independent Living:</b> Steve is becoming better at managing his own personal care. He is a sociable individual and he makes friends easily.		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1. Personal care course at school	Steve, special education teacher and teaching assistant	Annually in September IEP review
2. Explore possible options for adult services and programs - visit some if possible	Steve, parents, community living representative	January 2006
3. Register for any wait-listed programs or services that are likely to be needed after leaving school.	Steve, parents, community living representative	January 2006
4. Identify learning expectations that will facilitate transition to these programs	Steve, parents, community living representative, special education teacher	January 2006
5. Have student visit supermarket weekly with educational assistant to select snacks for coming week and to gain further familiarity with money and payment.	Educational assistant, special education teacher and Steve	Annually in September IEP review
6. Review status of community living programs	Steve, parents, community living representative, special education teacher	Annually in September IEP review

<b>Goal #3</b>	<b>Short-term:</b> (over 6 months to 1 year)	<b>Long-term:</b> (over 1 to 5 years)
<b>Recreational/ Social Activities</b>	Increase opportunities to meet friends in a social setting.	Continue to promote activities that are consistent with Steve's interests while expanding his circle of supports.
<p><b>Skills and Abilities Related to Recreation/Social Activities:</b> Steve is comfortable in a range of social settings. He has an easy going personality and enjoys participating in outdoor activities. He likes using maps and would enjoy planning trips for his family. Steve has a good circle of supports including good friends and a supportive family.</p>		
Tasks to be Completed to achieve Goal	Who is Responsible	Date to Review for Implementation
1. Find a youth group that Steve can join	Family, church members	January 2006
2. Weekly family swim at local community centre	Parent to accompany Steve	January 2006
3. Weekly swimming lessons at community centre	Parent to accompany Steve	Fall 2006
4. Formalize the support network	Parents, Steve	January 2006
5. Meet with support network every other month	Family, Steve, support network	Ongoing
6. Allow Steve to map out a family outing in the community	Steve, parents	Summer 2006
7. Allow Steve to plan and map out a family holiday	Steve, parents, family members	Summer 2007
8. Make dates for movies, concerts – invite a guest	Steve, family	Ongoing

## 2. RESOURCES

### A. TRANSITION PLANNING RESOURCES

- **Person-Centred Planning Tools**

#### **MAPS and PATH**

[www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com)

#### **Persons with Developmental Disabilities Central Alberta Community Board**

Person Centred Planning in Central Alberta is an initiative of the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Central Alberta Community Board that is intended to ensure that all supports and services provided to individuals with developmental disabilities are based on, and contribute to, each person's interests and desires. A number of documents, resources and tools have been developed for use by individuals, families, and support staff and are identified specifically below or through the following link:  
[www.pdd.org/Central/resources/personcp.shtml](http://www.pdd.org/Central/resources/personcp.shtml)

*Person Centred Planning Guidebook.* January 2004.

[www.pdd.org/docs/cent/PCP%20Guidebook\\_Jan2004.pdf](http://www.pdd.org/docs/cent/PCP%20Guidebook_Jan2004.pdf)

*My Person Centred Plan.*

[www.pdd.org/docs/cent/PCP\\_811\\_Jan19.pdf](http://www.pdd.org/docs/cent/PCP_811_Jan19.pdf)

*Self Advocacy My Life Workbook.* Prepared by the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Central Alberta Community Board. October 2003.

[www.pdd.org/docs/cent/SA%20CET%20WORKBOOK%20-%20Oct%20201.pdf](http://www.pdd.org/docs/cent/SA%20CET%20WORKBOOK%20-%20Oct%20201.pdf)

*Person Centred Planning Approaches. A Literature Review.* May 2001.

[www.pdd.org/docs/cent/PCP\\_Lit\\_Review.pdf](http://www.pdd.org/docs/cent/PCP_Lit_Review.pdf)

## **The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario**

*Creating a Good Life in Community: A Guide on Person-Directed Planning*

This group supports the self-determination of persons with disabilities. Members include self advocates, parents, individuals and organizations working together to make individualized funding in Ontario a reality. A Guide on Person-Directed Planning has been written to assist families and people with developmental disabilities to plan for their future. This guide provides some steps in which to approach person-directed planning. A detailed version and a plain language version are available on-line.

*Creating a Good Life in Community: A Guide on Person-Directed Planning*

Detailed version:

[www.individualizedfunding.ca/Guide%20on%20Person-directed%20Planning.pdf](http://www.individualizedfunding.ca/Guide%20on%20Person-directed%20Planning.pdf)

Plain Language Version

[www.individualizedfunding.ca/Guide%20on%20Person-directed%20Planning,%20Plain%20Language.pdf](http://www.individualizedfunding.ca/Guide%20on%20Person-directed%20Planning,%20Plain%20Language.pdf)

<http://www.individualizedfunding.ca>

## **Casey Life Skills**

Easy to use tools are available to help young people prepare for adulthood.

[www.caseylifeskills.org](http://www.caseylifeskills.org)

## **• Transition Planning Guides in Canada**

### **British Columbia**

*Your Future Now. A Transition Planning & Resource Guide for Youth with Special Needs and Their Families.* BC Ministry of Children and Family Development.

[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec\\_needs/pdf/your\\_future\\_now.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/pdf/your_future_now.pdf)

*Transition Planning for Youth with Special Needs. A Community Support Guide.* BC Ministry of Children and Family Development.

[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec\\_needs/pdf/support\\_guide.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/pdf/support_guide.pdf)

## **Alberta**

*A Parents Guide to Transitional Planning.* Persons with Developmental Disabilities Central Alberta Community Board.  
[www.pdd.org/Central/resources/transplanning.shtml](http://www.pdd.org/Central/resources/transplanning.shtml)

## **Saskatchewan**

*School to Life Transition Handbook. Five Steps to Successful Planning.* Rita McLeod for the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living.  
[www.mcleod-educational.com/misc/to\\_work.pdf](http://www.mcleod-educational.com/misc/to_work.pdf)

## **New Brunswick**

*Building Bridges: A Parent Guide on Transition from School to Work, Adult Life and Community Participation for Youth with Intellectual Disabilities (1997).* New Brunswick Association for Community Living, Fredericton, NB.

## **Ontario**

*Planning for Success: Adolescence to Adulthood (December 2004).* Erinoak, Ontario.  
[www.erinoak.org/resources/publications/Transit.Manual%20rev.%20Feb2005.pdf](http://www.erinoak.org/resources/publications/Transit.Manual%20rev.%20Feb2005.pdf)

## • Transition Planning Guides in the United States

### California

*A Guide for Parent and Families to Prepare Students with Special Needs to Enter Post-Secondary Environments.* WorkAbility I and the Family Transition Network. [www.everhart.leon.k12.fl.us/waguide.htm#whatis](http://www.everhart.leon.k12.fl.us/waguide.htm#whatis)

*Best Practices for Transition Services from School to Adult Life from the Consumer/Family Viewpoint.* California School to Work Interagency Transition Partnership (SWIPT). [www.everhart.leon.k12.fl.us/ts\\_bestprac.htm#1](http://www.everhart.leon.k12.fl.us/ts_bestprac.htm#1)

### Washington

*Transition Guide for Washington State.* The Center for Change in Transition Services, Seattle University. [www.seattleu.edu/ccts/docs/Transition%20Guide.pdf](http://www.seattleu.edu/ccts/docs/Transition%20Guide.pdf)

### North Dakota

*Bridging the Gap: Charting a Successful Transition from School to Living and Working Independently within the Community.* (1997). North Dakota Transition Guidebook. Minot, ND. [www.dpi.state.nd.us/transitn/publicatns.shtm](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/transitn/publicatns.shtm)

## • Other Transition Planning Resources

### Canadian Council for Exceptional Children (CCEC)

Since its founding, CCEC has advocated for exceptional students - those with disabilities and special challenges, and those with gifts and talents. CCEC is committed to those who work with special students - educators, support personnel and parents - recognizing that these dedicated people need the resources, tools and professional opportunities to perform their jobs well. <http://canadian.cec.sped.org/>

## **EnableLink**

Linking people with disabilities to a world of resources. Based in Toronto, the Canadian Abilities Foundation and EnableLink provides information for people with disabilities on a range of topics from around the world – links to the Abilities Magazine, community information, chat and message boards, information for families, youth, women, seniors, on a variety of issues including housing, health, employment, education etc.

[www.enablelink.org/index.html](http://www.enablelink.org/index.html)

## **Disability Ontario Online Resource (DOOR) for transition 2 adulthood**

This site opens the DOOR 2 Adulthood which helps adolescents with disabilities think about leading their own life. Get information and learn from other people through “Tips and Tricks”, “Blogs” and “Stories”. Check it out at: [www.ablelink.org/public/transition/default.htm](http://www.ablelink.org/public/transition/default.htm)

## **Mazemaster – Youth@bilities**

The Mazemaster® has been developed as a community-minded project that operates within a partnership between the Toronto Catholic District School Board and Human Resources Development Canada. Mazemaster / Youth@bilities is dedicated to providing valuable online information for young persons with disabilities between the ages of 14 to 35. In addition to a wide range of information on Employment, Education and Training, Youth@bilities also has resources that include a quarterly e-newsletter, a “What’s New” page, information on Independent Living, Advocacy, Arts and Culture and Recreation.

Go to [www.mazemaster.on.ca/newcov.cgi](http://www.mazemaster.on.ca/newcov.cgi) and select Youth@abilities under the Mazemaster Modules pull down menu.

## **Bloorview Kids Rehab**

Bloorview Kids Rehab is Canada’s largest children’s rehabilitation hospital. They are known the world over for care, research and education that give children with disabilities the tools to get where they want to go.

Tips on transition planning can be found in the PDF documents available on line. Check it out at [www.bloorview.ca/webpdfs/index.htm](http://www.bloorview.ca/webpdfs/index.htm)



## **National Dissemination Centre for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)**

NICHCY is based in Washington D.C. and serves as a central source of information in the United States on:

- disabilities in infants, toddlers, children, and youth;
- IDEA, which is the law authorizing special education;
- No Child Left Behind (as it relates to children with disabilities); and
- research-based information on effective educational practices.  
[www.nichcy.org/index.html](http://www.nichcy.org/index.html)

## **NICHCY Transition Planning Resources**

NICHCY's Transition Summary series focuses on preparing youth with disabilities to move from high school to the adult world.

[www.nichcy.org/transitn.asp](http://www.nichcy.org/transitn.asp)

This article provides an overview on transition planning.

*Transition Planning: A Team Effort*

[www.nichcy.org/pubs/transum/ts10.pdf](http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/transum/ts10.pdf)

## **National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)**

NCSET coordinates national resources in United States, offers technical assistance, and disseminates information related to secondary education and transition for youth with disabilities in order to create opportunities for youth to achieve successful futures.

[www.ncset.org](http://www.ncset.org)

## **NCSET Parent Briefs**

This series of articles promotes effective parent involvement in secondary education and transition.

[www.ncset.org/publications/default.asp#parent](http://www.ncset.org/publications/default.asp#parent)

## **Dr. Paula Kohler**

Dr. Kohler is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at Western Michigan University and is recognized for her research regarding effective transition practices for youth with disabilities.  
<http://homepages.wmich.edu/~kohlerp>

### **• Education Planning Documents**

#### **Ontario Ministry of Education**

Special Education Information  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/speced.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/speced.html)

The Individual Education Plan (IEP). A Resource Guide 2004  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/index.html)

Transition Planning. A Resource Guide 2002  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/transiti/transition.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/transiti/transition.html)

#### **York Region District School Board**

Special Education Information  
[www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/page.cfm?id=LSE000001](http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/page.cfm?id=LSE000001)

Special Education Documents  
[www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/page.cfm?id=LSE000002](http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/page.cfm?id=LSE000002)

IEP Guide for Parents  
[www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/w/schools/speced/SpecEdPlan-E-IEPGuide.pdf](http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/w/schools/speced/SpecEdPlan-E-IEPGuide.pdf)

IEP Template  
[www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/w/schools/speced/SpecEdPlan-E-IEPTemplate.pdf](http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/w/schools/speced/SpecEdPlan-E-IEPTemplate.pdf)

#### **York Catholic District School Board**

[www.ycdsb.ca/](http://www.ycdsb.ca/)

## **Toronto District School Board**

Special Education Information

[www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/special%20education/default.htm](http://www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/special%20education/default.htm)

Parents Guide to Special Education

[www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/programs/special\\_education/docs/Parent%20Guide%20PT%201%20April%202005.doc](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/programs/special_education/docs/Parent%20Guide%20PT%201%20April%202005.doc)

Special Education Plan

[www.tdsb.on.ca/\\_site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=94&menuid=325&pageid=252](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/_site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=94&menuid=325&pageid=252)

IEP Template

[www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/programs/special\\_education/docs/IEP%20Writer%202005.pdf](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/programs/special_education/docs/IEP%20Writer%202005.pdf)

## **Toronto Catholic District School Board**

Special Education Information

[www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/special%20education/default.htm](http://www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/special%20education/default.htm)

Parent's Guide to Special Education

[www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/guidetospecialeducation.htm](http://www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/guidetospecialeducation.htm)

Special Education Plan

[www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/special%20education/FINAL%20Sp.%20Ed.%20Plan%20NOV%202005.pdf](http://www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/special%20education/FINAL%20Sp.%20Ed.%20Plan%20NOV%202005.pdf)

Special Education Advisory Committee

[www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/special%20education/Introduction.htm](http://www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/special%20education/Introduction.htm)

Career Access (for students with special needs)

[www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/special%20education/Career%20Access.htm](http://www.tcdsb.org/curriculum/special%20education/Career%20Access.htm)

## **B. FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

### **• Ontario Disability Support Program**

Once your child reaches the age of 18, he or she may be eligible for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). This program provides income support and employment supports for people with disabilities and is funded through the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

To assist with the transition to independence, a person can apply to the ODSP up to six months prior to their 18th birthday. Applicants should go to the local Ontario Works or ODSP office, and request an application to determine financial eligibility. Applicants who are financially eligible are given a Disability Determination Package. The package must be completed by an approved health professional and submitted to the Disability Adjudication Unit (DAU) at the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Further information on the ODSP can be accessed at:

[www.children.gov.on.ca/CS/en/programs/SpecialNeeds/ontarioDisabilitySupportProgram.htm](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/CS/en/programs/SpecialNeeds/ontarioDisabilitySupportProgram.htm)

### **• Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities**

The Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) program, formerly known as the Handicapped Children's Benefit (HCB), provides help to parents to assist with some of the extra costs of caring for a child who has a disability. The purpose of the benefit is to help children who have disabilities live as normal a life as possible at home and in the community.

To be eligible the child must be under 18 years of age and live at home with a parent or a legal guardian. Also the income of a family will be evaluated to determine qualification, the child must have a severe disability that results in a functional loss and extraordinary costs must be present which are incurred directly as a result of the disability. Financial assistance ranges from \$25 to \$400 per month depending on the family's gross annual income and the number of other children in the family;

Application forms are available from Ministry Regional Offices and any questions can be directed to the Regional Office or the Ontario Disability Support Program Office.

• **Special Services at Home**

The Special Services at Home (SSAH) program helps children with developmental or physical disabilities and adults with a developmental disability to live at home with their families by providing funding on a time-limited basis to address individual needs. With this funding, families can purchase supports and services which they could not normally provide themselves and are not available elsewhere in the community.

Recently the Ministry expanded eligibility for SSAH funding to include individuals who are not living at home with their families and are not residing in ministry-funded residential accommodation.

This policy change has been made to support children with a physical disability and/or a developmental disability or adults with a developmental disability when they:

- move from their families' homes and receive no residential staff support from a community agency or an outside paid resource;
- currently live in accommodation outside the family home with no residential staff support from a community agency or outside paid resource;
- need to live away from home temporarily, due to family illness or other emergency; or
- are making the transition from their families' home to a group home, Familyhome program, or some other supported accommodation that is provided by a community agency. Individuals may be eligible to receive supports on a time-limited basis to help assist them to move to a new home.

The SSAH program does not fund supports for activities that are already provided by (or available from) a community agency.

Another recent change to the program means that primary caregivers can use their SSAH funding to compensate some family members to provide respite and/or personal development and growth. This change will help families with cultural and language differences and/or those living in rural or remote communities who are not able to use their full allocation of SSAH funding because it is difficult to find and retain support workers. With this change primary caregivers can now use their SSAH funding to compensate other eligible family members over the age of 18 who provide

services for respite or personal development growth, with the exception of a child under the age of 18 and a spouse of the individual who has a developmental disability, regardless of residence. Families may still apply for SSAH funding on behalf of their family members, regardless of where that person resides. Applicants to the SSAH program may also apply on their own, or with the help from their case manager/coordinator or adult protective services worker.

To apply for this program, you will need to complete an application form, which can be obtained through your local Ministry of Children and Youth Services Regional Office. You will also need a medical statement or psychological assessment clearly confirming the diagnosis of your family member's disability. It is important that this document indicates the nature of the disability and supports your request for service.

Further information on the SSAH program can be accessed at:

[www.children.gov.on.ca/CS/en/programs/SpecialNeeds/specialServicesatHome.htm](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/CS/en/programs/SpecialNeeds/specialServicesatHome.htm)

### • **Passport Initiative**

The Passport Initiative is funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. It provides community participation supports for young people who have a developmental disability. Passport is for individuals who are no longer eligible for school supports and would benefit from community participation supports or for those who have been waiting for day support services and are not eligible for Ontario Disability Support Program Employment Supports.

Applicants may be living at home with their families or in other living arrangements including group homes, supported independent living or with a Family Home provider. The supports that are eligible for Passport funding include work or volunteer activities, activities that develop skills in utilizing community infrastructure such as transportation services, shopping and libraries, activities of daily living that enhance social skills, independent living and personal management, and employment preparation activities where the individual does not meet the criteria for funding through the Ontario Disability Support Program Employment Supports.

The Passport Initiative provides individuals and families the option of receiving their Passport Support directly and/or making their own arrangements to purchase supports and services or choosing to access services through ministry-funded agencies.

Application forms are available from any of the ministry funded agencies that provide support services to individuals with a developmental disability, from your local school board Special Education divisions. Also general Information about the Passport Initiative is posted on the Ministry of Community and Social Services website at:

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/> Click on Developmental Services and then click on Programs for Young Adults Who Have Left School, or from the Ministry of Community and Social Services web site at [mcsc@gov.on.ca](mailto:mcsc@gov.on.ca). An individual who is still in school may apply for Passport however the application will not be processed until the individual leaves school and has reached the age of at least 18 years.

For more information about the Passport Initiative in your community contact:

In Toronto

Family Service Association (FSA). Visit the FSA website for more information at

<http://www.fsatoronto.com/programs/passport.html>

In York Region,

York Support Services Network. Applications should be mailed to the attention of the Passport Coordinator at:

York Support Services Network  
102 Main Street South , Unit #3  
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 3Y7

### • Tax Benefits, Credits, Deductions, & Rebate Information

The provincial and federal governments recognize that individuals with disabilities and their families often incur extraordinary expenses. Thus, provision is made in some cases for allowing certain designated expenses to be claimed on one's income tax. The information below describes some of the tax benefits, credits, deductions, and rebates people with disabilities may be able to receive or claim. Information changes over time so consult the websites listed below for further detail.

For information on Federal benefits review the Guide to government of Canada Services for People with Disabilities available online at: [www.pwd-online.ca/pwdcontent.jsp?&lang=en&fontsize=0&contentid=14](http://www.pwd-online.ca/pwdcontent.jsp?&lang=en&fontsize=0&contentid=14)

**Disability Supports Deduction:**

If your child is working and has an impairment in physical or mental functions, they may be able to deduct disability supports expenses incurred in the year to enable them to work, go to school, or do research. Amounts claimed as a medical expense and amounts that are reimbursed by a non-taxable payment, such as insurance, cannot be claimed.

**Disability Tax Credit:**

The Disability Tax Credit reduces the income tax that a person with a disability has to pay. If you don't need to use some or all of the tax credit because you have little or no income, you may be able to transfer all or part of it to your spouse, common-law partner or other supporting person.

To get the credit, you must complete a Disability Tax Credit Certificate (Form T2201), have it signed by a qualified medical doctor, optometrist, audiologist, occupational therapist, psychologist or speech language pathologist, and return it to the Canada Revenue Agency.

If your children are under 18 and qualify for the Disability Tax Credit, they may be eligible for the Child Disability Benefit which is a supplement to the Canada Child Tax Benefit and Children's Special Allowances payments. It helps low and modest-income families who care for a child with a severe and prolonged mental or physical impairment. To apply, families must obtain a signed Disability Tax Credit Certificate and the Canada Child Tax Benefit application form (RC66) for the child.

**Medical Expense Tax Credit:**

The Medical Expense Tax Credit allows the following:

- Disability-related expenses are often claimable, at least in part, as medical expenses on the income tax return.
- Expenses for part-time attendant care are claimable when unrelated to employment.
- Air conditioning for those with muscular dystrophy or multiple sclerosis may also be tax deductible.

Other eligible expenses include:

- Specially trained service animals that assist individuals who have a severe and prolonged impairment which markedly restricts the use of their arms or legs;



- Modifications to the home in order to enable a person with a severe and permanent mobility restriction to gain access to the home or rooms within – this extends only to persons who use a wheelchair for mobility; and,
- Incontinence products such as catheters, catheter trays and tubing required by reason of a physical disability.

All receipts for these expenses must be submitted in support of medical expense claims on a tax return.

**Gasoline Rebate:**

1.5 cents (Federal Excise Tax) per litre is available (up to \$200) every six months for fuel costs associated with transporting a person to and from medical appointments. Call 613-598-2290 for more information.

**Provincial Sales Tax (7%) on Motor Vehicle:**

This can be reimbursed on the cost of a motor vehicle purchased to transport a permanently disabled person. (Applicant should be a person with a permanent physical disability who purchases a motor vehicle for his or her own use or a qualifying family member of the disabled person who purchases the vehicle to transport the disabled person.) It is allowable to go back seven years for this rebate. Application forms may be obtained from the Ministry of Revenue by phoning 905-433-5844.

**Sales Tax Rebate:**

Clients 16 years and older are encouraged to get a Social Insurance Number in order to file an Income Tax Return, to be entitled to a \$100 rebate for sales tax.

**GST Rebate:**

At age 19, one is eligible for the GST rebate. One must file an income tax return. Those who have never done this can simply attach a note to the Income Tax return, explaining that they have never filed before and Revenue Canada will calculate how much GST rebate they are entitled to.

**Canada Pension Plan:**

A lump sum payment of the Canada Pension Plan can be awarded to some qualifying individuals. Those on Social Assistance should be aware that, in their cases, these payments may first go to pay back Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program for funds already received. Also, available through the CPP are Orphan's and

Widows Benefits paid to surviving children or spouse, whose deceased parent or spouse contributed to CPP.

For more information about federal tax benefits, credits and rebates visit the following website: [www.cra.gc.ca/disability](http://www.cra.gc.ca/disability)

- **Federal Budget Initiatives - 2007**

- Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)**

The Federal Budget 2007 announced the introduction of a new registered disability savings plan (RDSP). The plan will be available commencing in 2008 and will be based generally on the existing registered education savings plan (RESP) design. An individual eligible for the disability tax credit (DTC), their parent or other legal representative, may establish an RDSP. The DTC-eligible individual will be the plan beneficiary. The plan will consist of three elements:

1. Parents, beneficiaries and others wishing to save will be able to contribute to an RDSP. Contributions to an RDSP for a beneficiary will be limited to a lifetime maximum of \$200,000. Contributions will be permitted up until the end of the year in which a beneficiary attains 59 years of age.
2. Annual RDSP contributions will attract Canada Disability Savings Grants (CDSGs) at matching rates of 100, 200 or 300 per cent, depending on family income and the amount contributed, up to a maximum lifetime CDSG limit of \$70,000. An RDSP will be eligible to receive CDSGs up until the end of the year in which the plan beneficiary attains 49 years of age.
3. Canada Disability Savings Bonds (CDSBs) of up to \$1,000 per year will be provided to RDSPs established by low and modest-income families, up to a maximum lifetime CDSB limit of \$20,000, and will not be contingent on contributions. The maximum annual \$1,000 CDSB will be paid to an RDSP where family net income does not exceed \$20,883. The CDSB will be phased out gradually for those with family net income between \$20,883 and \$37,178. These income thresholds are for the 2007 taxation year and will be indexed to inflation for 2008, when RDSPs become operational, and for subsequent taxation years. An RDSP will be eligible to receive CDSBs up until the end of the year in which the plan beneficiary attains 49 years of age.

For more information on RDSPs, visit the federal website at:  
[www.cra-arc.gc.ca/agency/budget/2007/rdsp-e.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/agency/budget/2007/rdsp-e.html)

### **Working Income Tax Benefit – Disability Supplement.**

The Federal Budget 2007 announced the introduction of a Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB) with a Disability Supplement. A WITB of up to \$500 will be provided to single individuals with earnings greater than \$3,000 and net income less than \$12,833. Single individuals with earnings of \$5,500 or more and net income less than \$9,500 will receive the full \$500 amount.

The WITB will be provided as a refundable tax credit, effective for the 2007 tax year, with payments beginning in 2008. The WITB will be generally available to individuals 19 and older, not attending school full-time.

An additional supplement will be provided for low-income working Canadians with disabilities, as these individuals generally face even greater barriers to workforce participation. Employed individuals who are eligible for the disability tax credit (DTC) will qualify for the disability supplement of the WITB. Benefits from the WITB will start when the earnings of the DTC-eligible individual reach \$1,750. The disability supplement will increase with individual earnings up to a maximum annual amount of \$250.

The WITB and the additional disability supplement will be available for the 2007 tax year. For further details on the WITB and the disability supplement, visit the federal website at:  
[www.cra-arc.gc.ca/agency/budget/2007/witb-e.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/agency/budget/2007/witb-e.html)

### **• Registered Education Plans**

A Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) is a special savings plan that can help you, your family, or your friends save for education after high school. RESPs are registered by the Government of Canada to allow savings for education to grow tax-free until the person named in the RESP enrolls in education after high school.

The Government of Canada has special grant programs to help you save by increasing the amount you put aside for a child's education with:

- a Canada Education Savings Grant that is 20% - 30% - or 40% added to the money you put into an RESP – depending on your family net income; and

- a Canada Learning Bond, an additional grant worth up to \$2,000 to help modest-income families start saving for the education after high school of children born after December 31, 2003.

For more information about taxes and RESPs call 1-800-959-8281 or visit the following website:

[www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/hip/lld/cesg/publicsection/CESP/RESPs\\_General.shtml&hs=cgs](http://www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/hip/lld/cesg/publicsection/CESP/RESPs_General.shtml&hs=cgs)

## C. RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

The following chart identifies consumer groups and family groups that may be helpful contacts as you go through the transition planning process.

### • Toronto Region

Agency	Group Name	Telephone
Community Living Toronto	Self Advocate Council (C)	416-968-0650 ext 2339
	NY Parent Group (F)	416-225-7166 ext 249
Geneva Centre	The Autism Group (F)	416-322-7877 ext 242
	Advisory Committee (C)	416-322-7877 ext 242
	Peer Support Group (C)	416-322-7877 ext 242
	Asperger's Group (C)	416-322-7877 ext 242
Extend-A-Family	Safe & Secure Futures Network (F)	416-484-1317
Family Service Association	Independence Seekers (C)	416-971-6326 ext 224 or 323
	Support Group for Spanish Speaking Mothers(F)	416-971-6326 ext 239
Surrey Place Centre	Consumer Advisory Group (C)	416-925-5141

(F) = Family Group (C) = Consumer Group

- **York Region**

Some families may feel that the services and programs currently available do not meet the specific needs of their son or daughter. There are Parent Groups in various communities that have set up their own programs for this reason. For an overview of Parent Groups available throughout Ontario and the supports provided to families, call Family Networks at 905-478-4098. The York Region Family Network is an example of one agency providing supports to parents.

York Support Services Network provides case management and service navigation for the developmental services system. Call 1-888-695-0070 to make a referral or make service inquiries or visit the website at: [www.yssn.ca/ContentAbout.htm](http://www.yssn.ca/ContentAbout.htm)

- **Parent Self-Financed Cooperatives**

Community Living York South assists families in creating “Parent Self-Financed Cooperatives”. These are small groups of parents who pool their resources, hire a support staff and work together to develop a daytime schedule based on the unique needs and goals of their adult children.

For assistance with the creation of Parent Self-Financed Cooperatives, contact Cheryl Rennick:

Markham: 905-889-5239, ext. 254

Richmond Hill: 905-884-9110, ext. 254

Vaughan: 905-771-0011, ext. 254

Email: [crennick@ysacl.on.ca](mailto:crennick@ysacl.on.ca)

Website: [www.ysacl.on.ca/individuals.html#coops](http://www.ysacl.on.ca/individuals.html#coops)

- **Families for a Secure Future**

Families for a Secure Future is committed to reaching out to and supporting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families by establishing a network of local family groups across Ontario. These mutual support groups come together to learn and to support one another to take the next step toward imagining and creating a better future for their sons/daughters. Families for a Secure Future is based on the fundamental principle that individuals and their families can define and prioritize their own needs.

It is believed that individuals can make choices and direct their lives with support. To this end, Families for a Secure Future is governed by families

and individuals themselves. Further information on Families for a Secure Future is available at 905-770-2819 or through the website at: [www.familiesforasecurefuture.com/index1.html](http://www.familiesforasecurefuture.com/index1.html)

- **Extend-A-Family**

The mission of Extend-A-Family is to ensure that people with disabilities develop meaningful relationships and participate fully in the community. Having a disability often creates barriers that lead to isolation. Extend-A-Family works to break down the barriers by helping to create friendships and promote inclusion in the community. The staff play the role of "asker" – someone who will ask other ordinary families, individuals, children, groups and organizations in the community to get to know and welcome a child or person with a disability. Further information on Extend-A-Family is available at (416) 484-1317 or through the website at: [www.extendafamily.ca](http://www.extendafamily.ca)

- **Safe and Secure Futures Networks**

Safe and Secure Futures Networks, sponsored by Extend-A-Family, aim to empower families to develop and nurture a support circle with their family member who has a disability. A support circle is a group of people, primarily family and friends, who are invited to come together regularly, listen to hopes and dreams, consider possibilities, and plan with the individual. Circle members are intent on supporting the person to have choice and control in his/her life and to experience a variety of meaningful relationships, participating in and contributing to community life. Further information on Safe and Secure Futures Networks is available at Extend-A-Family.

- **Networks and Circles of Support**

Networking is the art of connecting to other people. It's about getting yourself out there and meeting different types of people. It's about building relationships with others based on common interests, hobbies or skills.

Sometimes networking is not easy, and for some people it can be difficult. Very often, people labeled intellectually disabled live isolated lives and because of this, need some help getting connected to other people in their community. Oftentimes, people with intellectual disabilities have a limited number of relationships which are often artificial and hinder

their ability to connect to the rest of their community. There are lots of reasons for this but sometimes people need a little help getting to know other people. That help might be going with someone to a new place, or it might be finding out what is going on in the neighbourhood.

In the end, networking allows a person to share their gifts and participate with others while getting to know different types of people who also have something to share.

A circle of support is a group of people who agree to meet on a regular basis to assist the focus person to accomplish personal visions or goals. The members of a circle of support are usually friends, family members, co-workers, neighbours, congregation members and sometimes service providers. The majority of people in a circle of support are not paid to participate. They are involved because they care about the person and have made a commitment to work together to make the person's life better.

No one builds their lives or finds friends on their own. Most depend on the natural support networks of family, friends and work colleagues to help make connections and open doors. Sometimes, support networks are also used as mentors, skill developers or advocates.

For further information on circles of support and relationships, visit the Family Service Association of Toronto website at [www.fsatoronto.com](http://www.fsatoronto.com) or call Louise Bailey at 416-971-6326, ext. 323.

In York Region, information on Circles of Support is available by contacting Ron Gumbs of York South Association for Community Living at 905-294-4971 ext. 59.

As mentioned above, Extend-A-Family also offers these same supports as well.

As an additional resource, the New Brunswick Association for Community Living has developed a manual called, *CIRCLES OF FRIENDS: An Instruction Manual for Facilitating Circles of Friends*. To order a copy, visit their website at: [www.nbacl.nb.ca/english/resources/books\\_videos.asp](http://www.nbacl.nb.ca/english/resources/books_videos.asp)



## D. POST-SECONDARY

For more information on Ontario Colleges visit the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities website at:

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/postsec/college.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/postsec/college.html)

Institution	Website	Telephone
Humber College	<a href="http://www.humber.ca">www.humber.ca</a>	416-675-6622 ext 4288
Seneca College	<a href="http://www.senecac.on.ca/cms">www.senecac.on.ca/cms</a>	416-491-5050 ext 2906
George Brown College	<a href="http://www.gbrownc.on.ca">www.gbrownc.on.ca</a>	416-415-2503
Centennial College - Early Childhood Education Assistant	<a href="http://www.centennialcollege.ca">www.centennialcollege.ca</a>	416-289-5000
Participation House for Adult Literacy Program and on line support for post secondary education.	<a href="http://www.participationhouse.net">www.participationhouse.net</a>	905-294-0944
Uplands Literacy Program		905-731-9557
York South Association for Community Living: • Richmond Hill • Markham • Vaughn	<a href="http://www.ysacl.on.ca">www.ysacl.on.ca</a>	905-884-9110 905-294-4971 905-771-0011
The Learning Centre for Georgina	<a href="http://www.lcgeorgina.org">www.lcgeorgina.org</a>	905-476-9900
Literacy Councils • Thornhill • Newmarket • Seneca College • Humber College	<a href="http://www.lcys.ca">www.lcys.ca</a>	905-771-7323 905-853-6279 416-491-5050 416-675-6622
Other Literacy Programs in your community can be found in York Link.	<a href="http://www.region.york.on.ca">www.region.york.on.ca</a> or <a href="http://www.region.york.on.ca/NR/yorklink/search.asp">www.region.york.on.ca/NR/yorklink/search.asp</a>	

## **E. ESTATE PLANNING**

### **Special Needs Planning Group**

An estate planning guide for families of people with a disability, titled “Removing the Mystery”, was developed by the founder of the Special Needs Planning Group. Since 1997, the Special Needs Planning Group's sole purpose has been to assist families in establishing plans which will provide their family members with a disability with a decent quality of life for their entire lifetime while at the same time, preserving their entitlement to government support programs. The Special Needs Planning Group provides information on wills, trusts, tax programs, and investment vehicles, to name a few, that is specific to families caring for a child with a disability.

This guide provides an in depth look at planning issues which commonly affect families who have family members with disabilities. This guide can be used by families, lawyers, accountants and/or planners. “Removing the Mystery” explores such topics as:

- Selecting an Estate Planning Professional;
- ODSP Benefits and Entitlements;
- Wills and Trusts;
- Henson Trusts;
- Trustee Selection and Duties;
- Planning Giving; and
- Probate Fees.

It is designed to benefit all families regardless of the disability of their family member. It can be previewed on the Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy's website at: [www.ofcp.on.ca/ltp\\_resources.html](http://www.ofcp.on.ca/ltp_resources.html). In addition, it can be purchased in CD- ROM format from the OFCP for \$9.95 or in paper format for \$29.95.

For more information on the Special Needs Planning Group visit the website at: [www.specialneedsplanning.ca/index.html](http://www.specialneedsplanning.ca/index.html)

### **Bloorview Kids Rehab**

Bloorview Kids Rehab provides general information on estate planning in a tip sheet called “Tips on Estate Planning for Special Needs Families.” It can be accessed at:

[www.bloorview.ca/webpdfs/tipestate.pdf](http://www.bloorview.ca/webpdfs/tipestate.pdf)

### **Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee**

In addition, The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee can provide assistance and information regarding guardianship, wills, estate planning, power of attorney, and substitute decision making by calling 1-800-366-0335.

## **F. SERVICE RESOURCES**

The following section provides contact information for access agencies in both Toronto Region and York Region. Refer to Part 1 section 5 for a description of how to access adult services in each region.

In addition, links to three other organizations are provided that are an excellent source for transition related information and services. These organizations offer lots of information on many other topics as well and are a good overall resource to families with children with developmental disabilities.

• **Toronto Access Agencies**

Agency	Website	Telephone
Addus	<a href="http://www.addus.org">www.addus.org</a>	416-544-8847
Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf	<a href="http://www.bobrumball.org">www.bobrumball.org</a>	416-449-9651 voice 416-449-2728 TTY
Christian Horizons	<a href="http://www.christian-horizons.org">www.christian-horizons.org</a>	416-630-3646
Common Ground Co-op	<a href="http://www.commongroundco-op.ca/">www.commongroundco-op.ca/</a>	416-421-7117
Community Living Toronto	<a href="http://www.communitylivingtoronto.ca">www.communitylivingtoronto.ca</a>	416-968-0650
C.O.R.E.		416-340-7929
COTA Health	<a href="http://www.cotahealth.ca/index.cfm">www.cotahealth.ca/index.cfm</a> toll free	416-785-9230 or 1-888-785-2779
Family Services Association	<a href="http://www.fsatoronto.com">www.fsatoronto.com</a>	416-971-6326
Geneva Centre for Autism	<a href="http://www.autism.net">www.autism.net</a> toll free	416-322-7877 or 1-866-Geneva-9
Griffin Centre	<a href="http://www.griffin-centre.org">www.griffin-centre.org</a>	416-222-1153
Harmony Place Support Services	<a href="http://www.harmonyplace.on.ca/">www.harmonyplace.on.ca/</a>	
JVS Toronto	<a href="http://www.jvstoronto.org">www.jvstoronto.org</a>	416-787-1151
Kerry's Place Autism Services	<a href="http://www.kerrysplace.org/">www.kerrysplace.org/</a>	905-841-6611
L'Arche Toronto	<a href="http://www.larche.ca/en/communities/on/daybreak_toronto">www.larche.ca/en/communities/on/daybreak_toronto</a>	416-406-2869
Mary Centre	<a href="http://www.marycentre.com">www.marycentre.com</a>	416-630-5533
Meta Centre	<a href="http://www.metacentre.ca">www.metacentre.ca</a>	416-736-0199
Montage Support Services	<a href="http://www.montagesupport.ca">www.montagesupport.ca</a>	416-780-9630
Muki Baum Association	<a href="http://www.mukibaum.com">www.mukibaum.com</a>	416-630-2222
New Leaf: Living and Learning Together	<a href="http://www.newleaf.ca">www.newleaf.ca</a>	905-478-1418 1-888-742-3391
New Visions Toronto	<a href="http://www.newvisionstoronto.com/index.cfm">www.newvisionstoronto.com/index.cfm</a>	416-868-1493
Operation Springboard	<a href="http://www.operationspringboard.on.ca">www.operationspringboard.on.ca</a>	416-913-1301
Participation House Toronto		416-439-3226

Agency	Website	Telephone
Pegasus Community Project for Adults with Special Needs		416-691-5651
Reena	<a href="http://www.reena.org">www.reena.org</a>	905-889-6484
Safehaven Project for Community Living	<a href="http://www.safehavenproj.org">www.safehavenproj.org</a>	416-535-8525
St. Vincent de Paul	<a href="http://www.svdptoronto.org">www.svdptoronto.org</a>	416-364-5577
Salvation Army	<a href="http://www.salvationarmy.ca/">www.salvationarmy.ca/</a>	416-321-2654
Surex Community Services		416-469-4109
Surrey Place Centre	<a href="http://www.surreyplace.on.ca">www.surreyplace.on.ca</a>	416-925-5141
Vita Community Living	<a href="http://www.villacharities.com">www.villacharities.com</a>	416-749-6234
Woodgreen Community Centre	<a href="http://www.woodgreen.org">www.woodgreen.org</a>	416-572-0000 ext 4001
York Community Services	<a href="http://www.ycservices.com">www.ycservices.com</a>	416-651-5400

• **York Access Agencies**

Agency	Website	Telephone
Behaviour Management Services of York & Simcoe	<a href="http://www.yorkcentral.on.ca">www.yorkcentral.on.ca</a>	
Christian Horizons	<a href="http://www.christian-horizons.org">www.christian-horizons.org</a>	416-630-3646 905-775-4406
Community Living Newmarket and Aurora District	<a href="http://www.clnad.com">www.clnad.com</a>	905-898-3000
Community Living Georgina	<a href="http://www.communitylivinggeorgina.com">www.communitylivinggeorgina.com</a>	905-722-8947
Independent Living Residences for the DeafBlind	<a href="http://www.ilrdb.ca">www.ilrdb.ca</a>	905-853-2862
Kerry's Place Autism Services	<a href="http://www.kerrysplace.com/main.htm">www.kerrysplace.com/main.htm</a>	905-713-6808

Agency	Website	Telephone
L'Arche Daybreak	<a href="http://www.larche.ca/en/communities/on/daybreak_richmond_hill">www.larche.ca/en/communities/on/daybreak_richmond_hill</a>	905-884-3454
Mary Centre	<a href="http://www.marycentre.com">www.marycentre.com</a>	416-630-5533
Meta Centre	<a href="http://www.metacentre.ca">www.metacentre.ca</a>	416-736-0199
MukiBaum Association	<a href="http://www.mukibaum.com">www.mukibaum.com</a>	416-630-2222
New Leaf: Living and Learning Together	<a href="http://www.newleaf.ca">www.newleaf.ca</a>	1-888-742-3391 or 905-478-1418
Participation House	<a href="http://www.participationhouse.net">www.participationhouse.net</a>	905-294-7834
Reena	<a href="http://www.reena.org">www.reena.org</a>	905-889-6484
Safehaven Project for Community Living	<a href="http://www.safehavenproj.org/index.html">www.safehavenproj.org/index.html</a>	905-775-4406
Vita Community Living Services	<a href="http://www.villacharities.com/main.asp?View=Vita">www.villacharities.com/main.asp?View=Vita</a>	416-749-6234
Community Living York South Richmond Hill Markham Vaughn	<a href="http://www.ysacl.on.ca">www.ysacl.on.ca</a>	905-884-9110 905-294-4971 905-771-0011
York Support Services Network • Intake • Community Crisis Line	<a href="http://www.yssn.ca/ContentAbout.htm">www.yssn.ca/ContentAbout.htm</a>	1-800-887-3679  1-888-695-0070 310-COPE

• **Other York Region Organizations**

Organization	Website	Telephone
Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• York Region Transit - Mobility Plus</li> <li>• Burt's Transportation</li> <li>• Adapt Transportation</li> <li>• Transit Georgina</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.yorkregiontransit.com/specialized.asp">www.yorkregiontransit.com/specialized.asp</a>  <a href="http://www.transitgeorgina.com">www.transitgeorgina.com</a>	1-866-744-1119  416-282-4869 905-868-9523 905-722-4616
Family Support Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Alliance – York Region Family Network</li> </ul>		905-478-4098
Community Information Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helpmate – Richmond Hill</li> <li>• Aurora Info</li> <li>• Newmarket Community Services Info</li> <li>• Markham Info</li> <li>• Vaughn Info</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.helpmate.volnetmmp.net/index.htm">www.helpmate.volnetmmp.net/index.htm</a>  <a href="http://www.york.cioc.ca">www.york.cioc.ca</a>	905-884-3000  905-727-8214 905-953-5110 ext 470  905-415-7500 905-832-2281 ext 8075
Recreation/Leisure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Olympics Ontario</li> <li>• Ontario Camping Association</li> <li>• Community Association for Riding for the Disabled (CARD) – Horseback Riding</li> <li>• Disabled Sailing Association of Ontario</li> <li>• Hydrotherapy Pool - Fee for service</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.osoinc.com">www.osoinc.com</a>  <a href="http://www.ontariocamps.ca">www.ontariocamps.ca</a>  <a href="http://www.card.ca">www.card.ca</a>  <a href="http://www.disabledsailing.on.ca">www.disabledsailing.on.ca</a>	1-888-333-5515  416-485-0425  416-667-8600  416-214-0358 Contact Participation House 905-294-0944
Respite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Helpers for Active Participation (CHAP) Program in York Region</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.respiteservices.com">www.respiteservices.com</a>	1-866-257-9776 ext 247



## • **Other Organizations/Resources**

The following organizations are a good source of information for families with children with developmental disabilities related to transition planning as well as providing general information on issues encountered in everyday life.

### **Surrey Place**

Surrey Place Centre has developed an extensive list of links related to developmental disabilities. Contact and other useful information on resources available in the Toronto area and beyond is provided under the following headings:

- Community Resource Directory
- Developmental Services
  - Children and Youth Services
  - Adult Services
  - Developmental Resources
  - Respite Services
- Dual Diagnosis and Mental Health
  - Services and Resources
  - Children's Mental Health
- Government Resources
- Health Care and Research

This information can be accessed on the Surrey Place website at:  
[www.surreyplace.on.ca/links\\_overview.php](http://www.surreyplace.on.ca/links_overview.php)

### **Erinoak**

Erinoak is dedicated to helping children with special needs “be the best they can be”. A comprehensive range of clinical services and family supports is provided to children and youth with physical, developmental and communication disabilities who live in the Regions of Halton and Peel and, in some cases, Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin. The agency's commitment is to build on the strengths of children so that they may achieve their potential and grow up to lead fulfilling lives. In relation to supporting young adults and their families with the transition into the adult service system, the agency has a Transition Coordinator, a social worker, who works within a multidisciplinary team of professionals, including physiotherapists, occupational therapists and paediatricians. He is available to clients and families for individual counseling and support, as well as, offering a wide variety of support and education programs (which are open to the community). The resource section of the Erinoak website also offers helpful information, including a Transition Manual,

and information related to the wide range of resources and how to access them, eg. the process for applying for a disability parking permit.

For more information visit the Erinoak's website.

[www.erinoak.org/templates/home.htm](http://www.erinoak.org/templates/home.htm)

[www.erinoak.org/resources/pubs.htm](http://www.erinoak.org/resources/pubs.htm)

### **respiteservices.com**

respiteservices.com consists of agencies funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services in both Toronto and York Regions.

Efforts are being made to collaborate to develop a more dynamic respite network for both children and adults in Toronto. As well, participants include delegates from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Toronto District School Board, Toronto Parks and Recreation, and the Children's Aid Societies. Other organizations providing respite services for families in Toronto are invited to join.

In York Region, a committee comprised of respite providers, representatives from the Special Services at Home Advisory Committee and the Ministry of Community and Social Services are working collaboratively to develop a more comprehensive respite service. Other organizations interested in assisting in planning further respite options for families in York Region are invited to join.

For more information visit the website at: [www.respiteservices.com](http://www.respiteservices.com)

### **Autism Ontario**

Autism Ontario (formerly Autism Society Ontario) is the leading source of information and referral on autism and one of the largest collective voices representing the autism community. Members are connected through a volunteer network of 31 Chapters throughout the Province of Ontario.

They are guided by a Board of Directors, composed primarily of parents of individuals with autism, plus a host of volunteers and respected professionals who provide expertise and guidance to the Society on a volunteer basis.

Autism Ontario is dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families, and the professionals with whom they interact. The association and its chapters share common goals of providing information and education, supporting research, and advocating for programs and services for the autism community. More information on Autism Ontario can be found at their web-site [www.autismsontario.com](http://www.autismsontario.com)

### **The Toronto Partnership**

Partner Agencies are working with individuals, families and the Toronto Region of the Ministry of Community and Social Services to improve the design and delivery of services for adult with developmental disabilities and their families. The shared goal of the partners is to improve the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities - today and into the future. They work together to provide simple access to a variety of services including respite services, day programs, residential programs, community support, and crisis response.

[www.dsto.com](http://www.dsto.com) is the website for the more than 30 Toronto agencies that are working together to provide responsive, high quality services and supports to adults with developmental disabilities and their families. There are many organizations and agencies that provide services and supports to adults with a developmental disability and their families. This website focuses upon the over 30 developmental services agencies funded by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services to provide one or more services or supports to adults and their families.

### **Ministry of Community and Social Services**

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) funds a number of services and supports for adults with a developmental disability and their families to allow them to live, work and participate in a wide range of activities within their communities, thereby improving the quality of their lives.

For further information on programs and services provided by MCSS visit the website at: [www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/english/pillars/developmental/](http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/english/pillars/developmental/)

### **Ministry of Children and Youth Services**

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) funds a variety of services and supports to children and youth under the age of 18 with developmental disabilities and their families, primarily through a network of community-based, board-operated and non-profit transfer payment agencies. The web page is intended to assist parents and caregivers seeking information about services funded and/or provided by the Ontario government for children with physical, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, mental health disorders, medical problems or those who need specialized services to participate in daily living activities.

For information about these services, visit the website at:  
[www.children.gov.on.ca/CS/en/programs/SpecialNeeds/default.htm](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/CS/en/programs/SpecialNeeds/default.htm)

## **YOUR INFORMATION**





*connections*