Essential Building Blocks for a Good Life After Graduation

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Beat the Heat 2015
In 90 minutes you will . . .

• Understand the Big Ideas for educators to consider as they support families in planning for transition

• Have resources to support families in exploring opportunities

• Have resources to support families in accessing services after graduation
Big Idea #1

Listen to the dreams of your students and families first
Parent Perspective
Planning

- A shared process, focused on the individual
- Clarifies what the individual wants
- Inventories the present
- Sets goals for the future
- Creates social connections
- Ends with a written set of goals and steps
Essential Questions

Sit down with your child and a few people who know him or her well and ask:
1. What do you like/dislike?
2. What are you good at? Talents? Strengths?
3. In what areas do you need support?
4. What are your dreams for the future?
Now name a goal based on 1-4 and brain storm ideas for carrying it out.
Where you might get assistance

- PATH at The Arc of Texas
- Information and links at txp2p.org, PTA
- Wikipedia for person centered planning
- Try your area Education Service Center
- Try your Local Authority for DADS services or DARS
- If no facilitators available in your area, do it yourself!
Post grad learning opportunities

Everyone needs a chance to continue learning

- Post-secondary learning institutions—4-year degrees, 2-year degrees, certifications, technology centers
- Informal learning opportunities—universities and community colleges that offer informal classes for experience and personal growth
- On-going learning opportunities--Centers for Independent Living, Arcs, other non-profits
Be sure parents understand...

- Differences in supports and rights under IDEA and on a college campus
- How curriculum choices in high school affect college degree options
- Importance of connecting with the Office for Students with Disabilities as they research college options
Post-secondary ed websites

Going-to-college.org
Thinkcollege.net
Lifeafterieps.com
Txp2p.org, Pathways to Adulthood, Life after Graduation
Work: making a contribution

Everyone must have a chance to enjoy the benefits of working in the community.

We must expand our view of work to include volunteering, working part-time, self-employment, and full-time, competitive employment.
Short-term supports after graduation: DARS

Dept of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Vocational Rehabilitative Services
- provide short-term, not long-term supports
- can pay for services, equipment, classes, etc. that enable a person to work
- can help a person find a job
(800) 628-5115
dars.state.tx.us/drs/vr.shtml
Long-term supports after graduation

- Medicaid Waivers—all including STAR+PLUS must provide:
  - Employment Assistance (help locating employment)
  - Supported Employment (provide on-going supports at work site)
- Local Authority support services
- Natural supports, Centers for Independent Living, PASS plans, etc, through SSI
Tips on finding work opportunities

- Look for a supportive work environment where people care for others
- Look for a place that is already diverse
- Set a goal for paid employment
- Consider self-employment (can get help from DARS)
Considerations to generate ideas

- Look for the intersection of your child's interests and talents with:
  - An environment that suits him or her
  - A place he can physically get to
  - What's in demand in the community
  - Where families have connections
  - Where she can get experience NOW
Creating a home

Where will your child live when he or she doesn't live with you any longer? That's a huge question for families! What does your child's future home look like?
Group Homes, run by DADS agency

Traditionally students with more severe disabilities have moved to a group home:
- Old-style ICFMR group homes, (Intermediate Care Facility), 6 or more residents
- HCS Group Homes (4 residents max), must have the HCS Medicaid Waiver (Home and Community-based Services), waiting list
Many parents now looking for more choice/control

- Greater control over the environment
- leads to more choice, individuality
- Keep the number of people with disabilities low (1-3 is ideal)
- If needed, provide continuity of live-in support
Ideas for home

- Use a Medicaid Waiver creatively
- Consider a shared residence, room-mate model with supports as needed, could include live-in support
- Rent several apartments and share supports
- Family consortium
- Own your own home
Building networks of support

- Concept comes from PLAN, a family organization in Vancouver (plan.ca)
- Networks build a circle of support around a person at risk of isolation
- Networks multiple a family's resources, ideas, connections and energy
- Networks build intentional community
- Networks enrich life today and provide for support beyond the parents' lives
Who joins networks?

- Immediate family, especially popular with siblings
- Extended family
- Neighbors, family friends, church members
- People who have worked with the focus person (school, attendants, therapists, etc)
- Peers
- People who share interests with focus person
What can networks do?

- Provide social opportunities
- Plan for the future, help carry out plans
- Help make decisions; alternative to guardianship
- Help find resources, make connections
- Interview attendants, monitor quality of care
- Have fun!
Who can help?

- *A Good Life*, by Al Etmanski, from PLAN. Available at plan.ca or Amazon for used books.
- txp2p.org, PTA, Life After Graduation has a How-to for starting a network.
- TXP2P has developed a program to promote networks and train facilitators, available in Central Texas now, state-wide in the next year.
TXP2P Pathways to Adulthood

- Transition Action Groups (TAGS)
- Annual conference in June, San Marcos
- Webinars
- Website, txp2p.org, Pathways to Adulthood
- 1-1 assistance, call or email the office
- Workshops across the state
- Transition Inventory at Pathways to Adulthood
School Support
Upon graduation from high school, Lisa will participate in the hiring and firing of caregivers and home healthcare staff by indicating preferences and comfort level through facial expressions.

Upon graduation from high school, Lisa will participate in volunteer activities through her church group with support from her family.

Upon graduation from high school, Lisa will be employed in an office setting with support from a direct care provider.
Effective Transition =

Asking questions,
Listening to the answers,
&
Offering information
Big Idea #2

Point parents in the right direction . . . You don’t have to know everything about every agency!
Parent Perspective
Eligibility for services at age 18

Eligibility is usually based on

(1) income

before age 18, based on family’s income
after age 18, based on income of person with a disability
Under $2000 in ready assets
Monthly income no more than $710 unearned income (lots of exceptions)
Eligibility

- And (2) disability
- Most agencies will use the most current school evaluation
- Other sources of proof of disability may come from a doctor or an evaluation done at an agency
Eligibility

After age 18, person with a disability is usually eligible for services associated with low income
- Food stamps (SNAP, family income til age 22)
- Section 8 housing

Look beyond disability-focused services for other assistance in your community; go to 211 by phone or https://www.211texas.org/
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- SSI is designed to help those who are aged, blind, and have disabilities, who have little or no income; it provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter.
- Provides a monthly check plus Medicaid through the Social Security Administration (federal)
Ways to apply for SSI/Medicaid

- Online at yourtexasbenefits.com
- Call 211
- SS toll free # 800-772-1213
- ssa.gov/disability/
- For more information: txp2p.org, Pathways to Adulthood, Services and Support
Medicaid Waiver programs

- Our most progressive use of Medicaid state and federal dollars
- Medicaid Waiver Programs assist people of all ages with disabilities to live in the community instead of an institution.
- Waiting lists are many years long, 160,000+ Texans on lists
- Advocacy at communitynowfreedom.org
Medicaid Waiver programs
To get on the waiting lists
- CLASS, MDCP—877-438-5658
- HCS, STAR+PLUS and TxHL (Texas Home Living)—call your Local Authority
- While on wait list, keep contact information up to date, respond to all mail and calls from agencies
- For more information, go to txp2p.org, PTA, Services and Supports
New Services

STAR+PLUS=Medicaid managed care
- Eligibility: physical/mental disability and qualify for Medicaid
- Provides health care
- Provides long-term services at age 21

Community First Choice=new federal money for people eligible for Medicaid and needing daily assistance; provides some waiver services for children and adults
To access new services

STAR+PLUS: everyone on Medicaid will get a letter and be notified

Community First Choice: for adults, call the LIDDA; for children, call the State Health Department
Local Authority

To find your Local Authority, go to Dads.state.tx.us/services/contact.cfm And type in your city, county or zip code. For Austin-Travis county: integralcare.org (512) 447-4141
Always a good starting point to find services for intellectual disabilities and mental illness. Request an in-take appointment.
Local authority changing its name to LIDDA (Local Intellectual & Developmental Disability Authority)
Advice for parents

- Be sure your child's name is on the Medicaid waiting lists
- Be sure your child has no more than $2000 in his or her name at age 18
- Get to know your local agencies
- Learn to use the internet for research
- Keep good records of every call and contact
- Be persistent, go up the chain of command
- Find a local parent group
School Support
Texas Transition and Employment Guide
COMMUNITY AND LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

INTRODUCTION

When you transition from high school to adulthood, you may need services and supports from the community to help you live as independently as possible. There are state and local community agencies and resources available to help you. You must qualify for these services and you are not guaranteed long-term services and supports. There are more people who want services than there are services available.

Many services are available through waiver programs. Contact the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) and find out about the different waiver programs. You will want to get on the interest list as soon as possible while you are still in school. The wait time for some of these services is ten or more years. Be sure to check back regularly to find out what your wait time is. Let DADS know if your address changes to keep your information up to date. The state or local agency will help you determine what services and supports you may need. The state or local agency may also refer you to other agencies or programs. This section has information about community and long-term services, supports, and resources to help you with living as independently as possible. Always remember that it is okay to ask questions about transitioning from high school to adulthood.

You can find supports for:

- attendant care - help in daily living activities for a person with a disability
- transportation - help with transportation needs for a person with a disability
- supported living choices - living where and with whom you want with supports
- group home - a home where a number of unrelated people in need of care, support, or supervision can live together
- behavioral supports - help in managing behaviors so that you can become as independent as possible
- independent living - help in transitioning to living on your own
- social, sport, and recreational activities - help in accessing activities in your community
- employment assistance - help for you to do and keep your job
- supported employment - a job with supports by service providers done by a person with a disability in the same job setting as a worker without a disability,
- assistive technology - services such as a computer or a service animal to help you be independent
- accessible housing - housing in your community that is available to meet the needs of your disability
- transportation options - public and private transportation to help you be independent and stay involved in your community
- protection and advocacy services - help with having a voice and choice with what is important in your life
- mental health services and supports - help with mental illness and substance use problems

Another type of help is called natural supports. These are contacts with others that happen naturally in your everyday life. They can be your family members, friends, neighbors, or coworkers. Natural supports can help you be more fully included in your community.
The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) includes four state agencies. Each of the HHSC agencies helps with providing community and long-term services and supports.

- **Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)**
  DARS has vocational rehabilitation services for people with physical and mental disabilities to help them become more independent and to prepare for, find, and keep a job.

- **Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)**
  DADS gives long-term services and supports to adults and children with medical and physical disabilities, older adults and caregivers, and adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DADS also helps with health and wellness services and waiver programs.

- **Department of State Health Services (DSHS)**
  DSHS has services for people with physical, health, mental health, and substance abuse problems. It also manages state-operated health care services, including hospitals, health centers, and health agencies.

- **Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)**
  DFPS works with communities to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse and neglect. It also works to protect the health and safety of children in daycare, foster care, and other types of 24-hour care.

**TIMELINE**

Every agency and service provider has its own set of rules for eligibility and timelines for services. Agencies will try to give you services as soon as possible after deciding if you are eligible. Not all services may be available right away. An agency may place your name on an “interest list” when a service is not available right away. The agency will contact your family when services are available.

Parents: If your child is identified with a developmental disability, put his or her name on an interest list until services are available [http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/interestlist/](http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/interestlist/). The wait may take years: [http://www.dads.state.tx.us/providers/waiver_comparisons/LTSS-Waivers.pdf](http://www.dads.state.tx.us/providers/waiver_comparisons/LTSS-Waivers.pdf)

Contact each agency’s local office for eligibility requirements, availability of services, and timelines for services.

**When or before you turn 14:**
- Identify any needs you have for long-term services and supports.
- Identify the type of long-term services and supports you may need.
- Explore the community and long-term services and supports that are available.
- Contact community and long-term services and supports agencies to discuss eligibility information.
- Apply for long-term services and supports if appropriate.

**When or before your turn 16:**
- Identify natural supports.
- Routinely check with DADS to see where you are on the interest list.

**When or before your turn 18:**
• Apply for long-term services and supports, if appropriate, if you have not already done so.
• Begin using natural supports if you are not yet doing so.

After graduation:
• Continue to contact community and long-term services and supports as needed.
• Continue to use and expand natural supports.

WHO CAN HELP

• Local School
  Your school district has a transition and employment designee (TED) to help you and your parents with information about community and long-term services and supports. You can find information about your school’s TED at: http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18FWCountyInformation.aspx?ID=Transition

• Local Resources
  You and your parents may find information about community and long term services/supports. This may include local offices of state agencies or support groups.

• Texas Transition Network Contacts – Transition in Texas
  The transition specialist at your regional education service center (ESC) can give you and your parents information about community and long term services/supports. A list of transition specialists can be found at: http://www.transitionintexas.org/Page/7

• AskTED
  AskTED is an online list of Texas schools, including charter schools. Use this list to find contact information for districts, schools, and education service centers. http://www.tea.state.tx.us/districtinfo.aspx

• Texas School District Foster Care Liaison
  Each school district/charter school in Texas has to have at least one person to help a student who is in foster care enroll in or transfer to a school or charter school. A list of the foster care liaisons can be found at: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/FosterCareStudentSuccess/liaisons/

• Health and Human Services (HHSC)
  • Home and Community-Based Services: Which Programs Do What?
    This site has information about six programs that provide home and community-based services. These programs are sometimes called "Medicaid waivers" or "waiver services." http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/medicaid/managed-care/home-and-community-based-programs-english.pdf
  • 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network
    This site has information about local services, programs, and agencies. https://www.211texas.org/
  • Your Texas Benefits
This site gives information about SNAP food benefits, health-care benefits, cash help for families, Medicare savings, and long-term care.
https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/ssp/SSPHome/ssphome.jsp

- Medicaid and other health and wellness programs
  http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/QuickAnswers/index.shtml

- Department of Aging and Disability Services
  - All DADS Services
    http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/listofservices.html
  - Help for Texans
    This site has information to help you live independently.
    http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/index.cfm
  - Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) programs
    - DADS Long-Term Services and Supports Entitlement Programs
    - Texas Long-Term Services and Supports Waiver Programs
      http://www.dads.texas.gov/providers/waiver_comparisons/index.html
  - DADS Community Options Booklet
    This site lists your options for living in the community.
    http://www.dads.state.tx.us/providers/community_options.pdf
  - Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) (waiver program)
    http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/faqs-fact/class.html
  - Home and Community-based Services (HCS) (waiver program)
    http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/faqs-fact/hcs.html

- Department of State Health Services
  http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/Services.shtml

- Department of Assisive and Rehabilitative Services
  - DARS rehabilitation services
    http://www.dars.state.tx.us/services/index.shtml
  - DARS independent living services
    http://www.dars.state.tx.us/drs/il.shtml

- Department of Family and Protective Services
  Information for parents, foster youth, foster and adoptive parents, business and service providers, people with disabilities, elderly, teachers and professionals, and the general public.
  https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/1_Am/default.asp
  DFPS Texas Youth Connection
  https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/tyouth/Default.asp

- The ARC of Texas
  Medicaid waiver programs
  www.texasprojectfirst.org/Guardianship.html
  www.texasprojectfirst.org/Guardianship.html
  http://www.thearcoftexas.org/site/PageServer?pagename=services_benefits_medicaid_waivers

- Disability Rights Texas
  Disability Rights Texas is the federally designated legal protection and advocacy agency (P&A) for people with disabilities in Texas. You can contact the local office for help.
  http://www.disabilityrightstx.org/
• Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD)
  TCDD supports organizations to help people with developmental disabilities live on their own.
  http://www.tcdd.texas.gov/

• Texas State Independent Living Council
  Find a center for independent living in Texas.

• Private Providers Association of Texas (PPAT)
  PPAT is your connection to great people, timely information, essential tools, and effective advocacy.
  http://www.ppat100.com/

• Directory of Community Resources in Texas
  http://disabilityresources.tamu.edu/

• Special Olympics Texas
  http://specialolympicstexas.org/

Please send additional thoughts and comments to sped@tea.state.tx.us
Big Idea #3

The IEP is “Transition”. … “Transition” is the IEP!
Parent Perspective
IEPs and ARDs: Alphabet Soup

School meetings are emotional for parents--
   And emotions block your ears!

- Help parents understand your jargon
- Repeat primary information
- Simplify forms
- Show respect in all words and actions
- Show you know and care about their child
School Support
Lisa

- Draft IEP has a postsecondary goal for employment
- Mom is worried the school isn’t listening to her

What might help this parent? How would you respond?
Questions?
THANKS
Essential Building Blocks for a Good Life After Graduation

**Big Ideas**

1) 

2) 

3) 

**Notes**

**Resources**

- Texas Transition & Employment Guide: http://www.transitionintexas.org/Page/143
- Transition in Texas: www.transitionintexas.org
- Texas Project FIRST: http://texasprojectfirst.org/
- 211 Texas: www.211texas.org
- Life After IEPs: www.lifeafterieps.com
- Think College: www.thinkcollege.net
- Got Transition: gottransition.org

**Contact information**

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Texas Parent to Parent  
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**One way I will use the information from this session in my work this year:**