

Ten Tips for Getting Your Child Ready for Life After High School

Students who have involved parents have more successful outcomes at every stage of their educational journey. By asking questions and seeking information, you are off to a great start!

1. Learn more about transition issues

You may need to make decisions guardianship, sex education, driving, etc. based upon your child's level of independence, competency, family values and resources. Attend Federation trainings such as Introduction to Transition, and our conferences, Planning a Life, and Visions of Community. Send your child to learn about self-advocacy, creating a vision, and running their IEP Meeting.

2. Set realistic goals

Include your child in setting goals for the future, and make sure their school program prepares him/her to meet those goals. All students need to gain as many independent work and life skills as possible.

3. Encourage independence

Parents are not always going to be around. Begin to encourage independent travel, self-care activities, money management, and decision-making now. A person with disabilities may always need support, but each thing s/he can do alone is a great gain.

4. Familiarize yourself with adult service systems

Special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is an entitlement. Students are entitled to education and support services until graduation or aging out at 22. **The adult service system is based on eligibility.** There may be wait lists for programs. Learn when and how to apply.

5. Have high expectations

You are helping your child build a meaningful adult life. Having high expectations shows your child you believe in her/his abilities. Teach your child household tasks such as doing laundry, preparing simple meals, or sewing on a button. Give them responsibilities at home.

6. Encourage social activities

Everyone needs friends. Young people with disabilities need to be out in their community, learning new things, attending events, exercising, having fun with their peers. Explore community connections. Call your neighborhood community center or YMCA.

7. Obtain real work experiences through Mass Rehab Commission Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Students with disabilities need to have a variety of work experiences to make informed choices about future employment. Contact your local MRC. Your child is entitled to participate in the Pre-Employment Services. Add employment skills such as job coaching and travel training to your child's IEP goals.

8. Encourage good grooming and work habits

Emphasize the importance of appropriate dress, good grooming skills, punctuality, reliability, and hard work. Encourage students to take responsibility for themselves and their work.

9. Foster acceptance of feedback and criticism

Teenagers can be sensitive to the mildest criticism. Young people must learn to cope with the standards of the workplace and with unfair criticism. Practicing acceptable responses to criticism needs to begin early.

10. Provide opportunities to manage money

People should be paid for their work. Teenagers are no different. Gradually introduce money management. Talk about your expenses. Let them practice buying needed items at the store. As early as possible encourage your child to shop using their own money and make a budget.



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS