



Statewide Parent  
Advocacy Network

SPAN  
35 Halsey Street  
Newark, NJ 07102  
800-654-SPAN/973-642-8100  
[www.spannj.org](http://www.spannj.org)

## © **Guidelines for Transition: Basic Stuff to Know!**

### **When must planning for transition start?**

In New Jersey, transition planning must begin by the beginning of the school year in which a student will be 14. The IEP must include a statement of your child's strengths, interests and preferences and identification of a course of study and related strategies/activities that are consistent with their strengths, interests and preferences, and are intended to help students develop or attain post-secondary goals related to training, education, employment, and independent living if appropriate.

### **Can students attend their IEP transition meetings?**

Your transition-age youth must be invited to any meeting in which transition will be discussed. The student may choose not to attend.

### **What should be in the IEP for a NJ student with disabilities at age 14?**

The IEP for a student who is 14 must include a statement of the State and local graduation requirements that s/he is expected to meet. If the student is exempted from or there is a modification to local or state high school graduation requirements the IEP must include a rationale for the exemption or modification and a description of the alternate proficiencies to be achieved in order to qualify for a state endorsed diploma.

### **What should be in the IEP for a NJ student with disabilities at age 16?**

The IEP for the school year during which the student turn 16 must include measurable post-secondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments; and appropriate transition services designed within a "results oriented" process to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

### **What happens at age 18 for NJ students with disabilities?**

At least three years prior to students reaching the age of majority (18) the IEP team must meet with students and provide information to them about reaching age of majority – their rights, etc. Students become the decision-makers upon reaching 18 regardless of ability unless parents pursue guardianship. If you think that your child will need support in exercising his/her legal capacity when s/he turns 18, you'll need to explore partial or full guardianship and its alternatives before s/he turns 18. For more information, see [www.ganji.org](http://www.ganji.org) and [www.plannj.org](http://www.plannj.org). If parents need legal assistance, the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network also has a list of lawyers who practice guardianship law. (This list includes any attorney who asks to be placed on the list and is not an endorsement of any lawyer).

## **When will the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services get involved?**

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) will provide consultation to a student at age 14. Two years prior to graduation contact should be made with DVRS to determine eligibility for services. A student who receives SSI or SSDI is automatically eligible for DVRS services. The Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) should be in place prior to a student's graduation from high school.

## **What other agencies should be involved?**

The IEP team must also consider the need for consultation from other agencies (Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Division of Mental Health Services, etc.) beginning when the student turns 14, or younger if appropriate.

## **How can you maintain your adult child on your health insurance?**

If your child has a developmental disability (DD) and is covered under your family health plan, ask your employer or insurance company about a "Certification of Disability for the Handicapped Children Provision" form. This provision may continue insurance for your child into adulthood at no extra cost for as long as you continue to work there. Certain eligibility criteria apply, for instance your child's inability to conduct "self-sustaining employment", their age/dependent status at time of application and whether they are enrolled in your health plan. Also, explore whether your employer has separate plans for dental, vision, or prescription coverage, as you may need to apply for each of these individually.

Another resource is the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) regulations which mandate that parents be given the option of continuing to cover their child by paying the full cost of the coverage. If your child has a permanent disability, you may be able to continue coverage for them at no extra cost by submitting the designated form at the proper time.

Regardless of whether your child has a special need or disability, coverage for young adults is available in NJ through the Dependent Under 31 (DU31) law. It allows young adults to continue coverage or to become covered under a parent's group plan as an over-age dependent until the youth's 31<sup>st</sup> birthday. Eligibility requirements and coverage limits may apply. More information about health plans is available at [www.state.nj.us/dobi/division\\_consumers/index.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dobi/division_consumers/index.htm).

## **What other resources might be available to support your youth or young adult?**

***Social Security/Medicare/Medicaid:*** *Supplemental Security Income (SSI)* is a federal program that provides monthly cash payments to people in need. SSI is for people who are 65 or older, as well as for blind or disabled people of any age, including children. To qualify you also must have little or no income and few resources. This means that the value of the things you own must be less than \$2,000 if you are single or less than \$3,000 if you are married. The value of your home or car does not count, and the value of certain other resources, such as a burial plot, may not count either. To get SSI, you also must apply for any other cash benefits you may be able to get, you must live in the US. In some instances if you are not a U.S. citizen, but you are a resident, you still may be able to get SSI. If a young adult (age 18 or older) was previously denied SSI, he/she can reapply based upon their current income level, not their family income. For more information on SSI you may call **1-800-772-1213**. *Medicare* is another federal health insurance program for people age 65 or older, some disabled people under age 65, and people of all ages with End-Stage Renal Disease (permanent kidney failure treated with dialysis or a

transplant). You can call (800) 772-1213 to get more information about SSI and Medicare for End-Stage Renal Disease.

The SSI application process will require forms to be filled out, submission of medical and financial documentation and likely a visit to your local Social Security office. If your child has complex needs, ask about Social Security “presumptive eligibility.” You may find it easier to follow-up on an application by telephone rather than in-person visits whenever possible. Also, when you call Social Security, ask them to narrow down what they want mailed in such as medical records, because you can perhaps list whom your child sees now noting that there is a long history with that doctor or specialist, and you can send more information if needed. If eligible for SSI, it may take several months to receive benefits. You also can get medical assistance (*Medicaid*). You will receive a separate acceptance letter and a NJ Medicaid ID card. NJ Medicaid is a State program. If you have questions about Medicaid, you may call the Medicaid hotline at (800) 356-1561 or contact your local Medical Assistance Customer Center <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmahs/info/resources/macc/index.html>.

***Special Medicaid:*** Families with very low income can apply for “Special Medicaid,” called *Jersey Care*, through their County Board of Social Services: [www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/foodstamps/cwa/index.html](http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/programs/foodstamps/cwa/index.html). Medicaid provides unique services to persons with a variety of disabilities through home and community-based waiver programs. For more information on waiver programs you may contact the Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Disability Services at 888-285-3036. Likewise, The NJ WorkAbility Program offers full New Jersey Medicaid health coverage to people with disabilities who are working, and whose earnings would otherwise make them ineligible for Medicaid. More information on NJ WorkAbility can be found by calling the DHS Division of Disability Services at 1-888-285-3036.

### **How do I make sure I am prepared to help my youth/young adult apply for benefits?**

Most adult program applications require relatively recent health information, and will provide you with the medical exam forms you need. For guardianship, there must be two doctor’s exams within 30 days of the date your child turns 18. Because many doctors have waiting lists, you can plan ahead setting up visits within this timeframe. You can also have doctors fill out the forms for guardianship, Medicaid, and SSI (can copy guardianship/Medicaid forms) at the same visit.

### **How do I get my youth/young adult an ID if they are not going to be a driver?**

If your teen is not going to be a driver, it may be helpful to get a “non-driver handicapped id” (identification card) at age 17 from the NJ Department of Motor Vehicles (see [www.state.nj.us/mvc/Licenses/NonDriverID.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/mvc/Licenses/NonDriverID.htm)). To obtain this ID, bring your teen’s birth certificate, social security card, school ID with report card, and other photo ID like child safety card to the DMV. This DMV card can be used anytime your teen needs proof of identity.

### **Who can help with transition?**

- Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, 800-654-SPAN/973-642-8100, [www.spannj.org](http://www.spannj.org)
- Special Child Health Services County Case Management Units [www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/sch/sccase.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/sch/sccase.shtml) or State office at 609-777-7778
- Family Support Coalition [www.familysupportcoalition.org](http://www.familysupportcoalition.org)
- Centers for Independent Living [www.njsilc.org](http://www.njsilc.org)

- NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Disability Services (888) 285-3036, or Division of Developmental Disabilities at (800) 832-9173

**Where can I find Transition resources?**

- SPAN Transition Resources for Health Professionals (also useful for parents!)  
[www.spannj.org/keychanges/TransitionResourcesHealthPractitioners.pdf](http://www.spannj.org/keychanges/TransitionResourcesHealthPractitioners.pdf)
- SPAN Champions for Progress-interactive CD for students (work, school, health)  
[www.spannj.org/transition/TransitionCD/start.htm](http://www.spannj.org/transition/TransitionCD/start.htm)
- Boggs Center University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities resources  
[http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter/projects/keep\\_real\\_more.html](http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter/projects/keep_real_more.html) and  
<http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter/products/BeingaHealthyAdultHowtoAdvocateforYourHealthandHealthCare.html>

Families who have children eligible for the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) can determine eligibility from birth. These families can choose to link with DDD before DVRS in terms of adult living support. These agencies have agreed to determine eligibility of a person independently of the other. For students with disabilities who are potentially eligible to receive services from DDD the district must provide the necessary materials to the parent to apply for those services pursuant to the Uniform Application Act. DDD can put a student on a wait list for day programming five years prior to exiting the school if appropriate. Eligibility for adult services (i.e. day program, residential, real life choices, etc.) from DDD typically do not begin until the student has turned 21 and aged out of public education.

- There should be a designated person responsible to serve as a liaison to postsecondary resources and make referrals to the resources as appropriate.
- Students should meet transition components of the IEP before graduation; a student who has enough credits to graduate has not automatically met his/her transition components.
- Students have the right to participate in graduation ceremonies with their friends and still continue with their entitlement to education (as per Alicia's Law 2008) if appropriate.
- When a student graduates or ages out of school, the student must be provided with a written summary of his/her academic achievement and functional performance prior to the date of the student's graduation or exit. This summary must include recommendations to help the student in meeting post-secondary goals.
- The case manager is responsible for transition planning!!!