



READY FOR ADULTHOOD CHECKLIST

A Collection of Practical Next Steps and Strategies for Preparing for Adult Life

Do you have a teenager graduating school in the next four years or less?

This checklist highlights some strategies and next steps that can help you plan ahead and be proactive to make this next transition a successful one. For more details and resources to support these strategies and action items, please see the *Planning for Adulthood Action Guide* in this toolkit.

PREPARING FOR GRADUATION

A clear vision for life beyond high school is key to executing a successful transition plan. Your expectations for what opportunities will be available to your child, at the end of their high school career, should be made clear to your education team at the beginning of your child's high school career.

Steps for Being Proactive

- Write a vision statement and have clear expectations of what options you want your child to have at the end of high school. Share your expectations and vision with your education team in grade nine.
- In grade 9, request that your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) includes a transition plan with clear objectives for adult life. Be clear what credits you want your child to work towards, what credentials they will graduate with and what pathways you want them to explore ahead of graduation.
- Have your child actively involved in the community inside and outside of school. Variety is key. Focus on roles and opportunities that will help your child develop relationships.
- Explore a number of opportunities and pathways to adulthood. There isn't "one" way to become an adult.

STEPS FOR BECOMING AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY MEMBER

Planning for life beyond high school can feel daunting. Without the routine of going to school, your child's day could feel like a blank canvas. It is not surprising then, that one of the biggest changes that people with a disability often experience after high school is in their daily routines and what they spend their day doing.

- Start really focusing on the things your child is passionate about and pay attention to what brings them joy.
- Create a variety of opportunities for them to become more aware of their likes and dislikes, as well as their strengths and weaknesses.
- Find time for activities that will; grow their confidence, learn how to adapt to new environments, and that will open their eyes to the possibilities for their life.
- Seek out opportunities for your loved one to contribute and be seen as an active community member.
- Spend time with new people, try new things and intentionally stretch your child's comfort zone.
- Allow your child the freedom to take safe risks and learn from their mistakes. This is one of the most powerful ways to grow and become the best human we can be.
- Use a role-based mindset to plan and explore interests.
- Think differently about the types of contributions your child can make to their community.
- Ask people in your life like educators, neighbors, family, and friends to help you identify your child's contribution, gifts, and passions.

STEPS FOR PREPARING FOR POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL

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- Get clear on whether your child will be most successful in a general college program with accommodations or a modified program with accommodations ([CICE Program](#)). Know the advantages and disadvantages of both programs, the application requirements and the accreditation they will earn.



- Be clear with your school team, in grade 9, about the number of credits you want your child to earn and what type of accreditation you want them to graduate with. If you aren't sure in grade 9, keep your expectations high and keep a high school diploma as your goal.
- Be aware of what a typical college day looks like and support your child to learn how to follow a new type of schedule or arrange for outside support.
- Have tough conversations with your child about managing the new found freedom they will experience at college. Create a safety plan that brings everyone peace of mind. Talk about expectations and strategies for being safe and responsible while still having fun.
- Do some research on the financial resources (grants, bursaries, and scholarships) available to your child a year or two in advance of graduation. Make a list of critical deadlines, seek out letters of support and write applications in advance.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS TO CONSIDER

Financial Resources To Apply For

- Apply for ODSP when your child is 17.5.
- Apply to the DSO when your child turns 16 (for individuals with a developmental disability).
- Apply for passport funding when your child turns 18.

Documentation to Apply For

- Apply for an Ontario Photo Identification Card after age 16.
- Apply for a Travel Passport if you haven't already done so.

Focus On Developing and Maintaining Friendships

- Help your child to use social media or platforms like LinkedIn to stay connected with friends, educators, and other contacts from their high school career before graduation.
- Collect emails and phone numbers for three close contacts from school, work or your community to stay in touch with.
- Start researching a new, age appropriate social activity with your loved one that can help them meet other adults in your neighborhood or larger community.