

Family Education Sheet

Moving from Pediatric to Adult Care: Top Things I Wish I Knew About Transition to Adulthood



Boston Children's Hospital
Autism Spectrum Center

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This Family Education Sheet was created by the Family Advisory Council (FAC) at the Autism Spectrum Center. The FAC is made up of parents and caregivers of children like yours, and many of them have helped their own children transition from adolescence to adulthood.

- 1 **Remember that autism is a spectrum.** Some information will be more relevant to you and your child and some will not. The transition to adult care looks different for every family.
- 2 **Listen to others and build a network of people you can talk to and ask questions.** This could be friends or people associated with your child's medical team.
- 3 **Before the transition process starts, step back and think about your family's vision for your child's future,** including needs and goals.
- 4 There is a lot of information about transition out there, and it can be hard to sift through and find the most relevant information for your family. **Take your time,** see what matters most for your unique situation and save it.
- 5 **The path toward transition looks different for each person.** Some may head for college, while others need more support. Avoid the comparison trap.
- 6 **Keep track of all the forms you submit for services,** such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), MassHealth and Department of Developmental Services (DDS). You may need them again down the road. Make photocopies or scan and save them just in case!
- 7 **Organize all of the information you get about resources for transition.** Binders are a great tool.
- 8 **Get legal advice about financial questions.** Other parents are a great resource for learning which legal experts are skilled in this area.
- 9 **Pay attention to laws** because they can change.
- 10 **Attend information trainings and seminars early on.** Even if you hear the same information many times, it will help you feel more prepared when your child reaches 16-18.
- 11 **Plan ahead.** Start thinking about things like guardianship and Social Security, for example, sooner rather than later—all of this can take a long time!
- 12 It may not be easy, but **you can do this.**